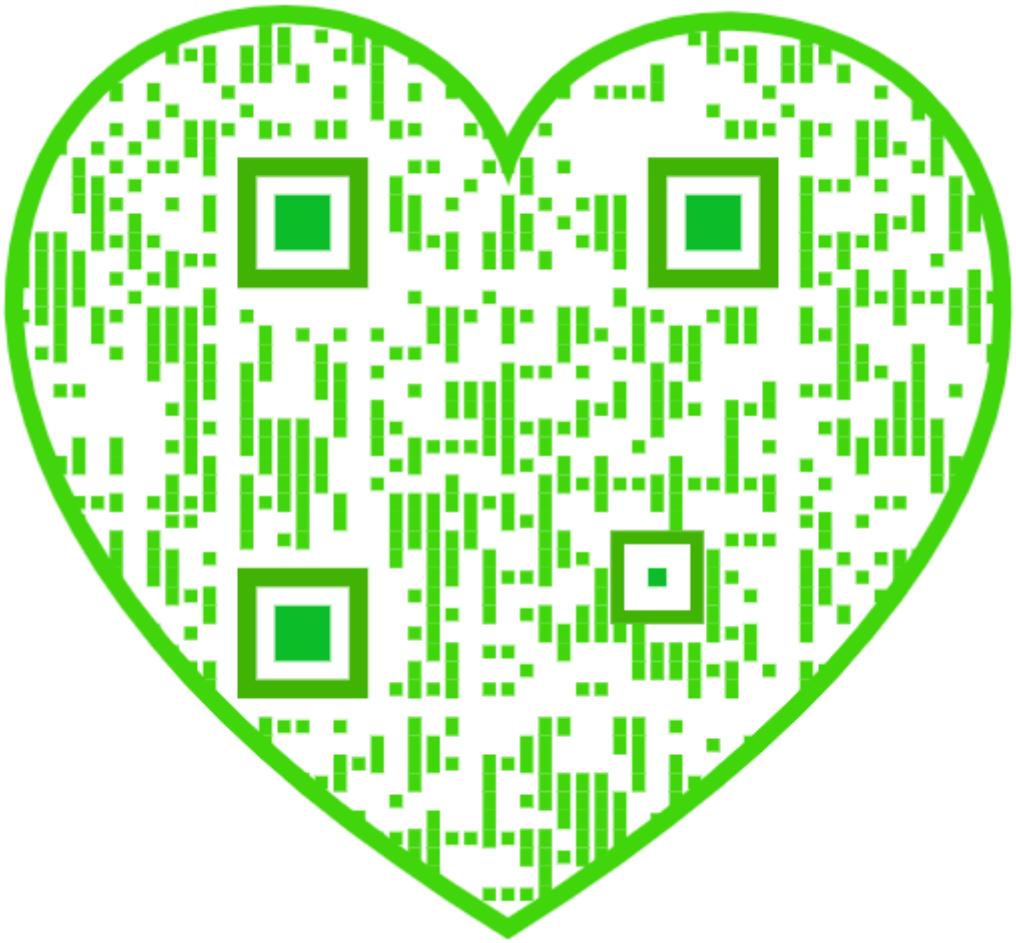
The Indian Runner Duck Book

C. S. Valentine



The Indian Runner Duck Book

The Only Authoritative American Book about this Marvelous Egg Machine

Text and Photographs
by
C. S. VALENTINE

"They say she did!"
"Who did?"
"The Indian Runner Duck."
"Did what?"
"Laid 320 eggs in one year."

Second Edition
Revised and Enlarged
Price in Paper 75 cents post paid Cloth Edition $1.00, postage 5 cents

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F. H. VALENTINE
1911

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The Runner a-running did trippingly run
To help out the farmer and lads;
The mortgage wiped out and the College bills paid:
Who says she shall rank 'mongst the fads?

Press of
ERNEST FAIRMAN DOW
West Newton, Massachusetts

$1.05

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NO. 1

"The White Queen."

The Indian Runner Duck Book

THE INDIAN RUNNER DUCK BOOK

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Some Guesses and Some Facts About INDIAN RUNNERS

CHAPTER I

I think it was about 1904 or 1905 that the first important literature concerning the Indian Runner Ducks was published in this country. At about this time, good articles, dealing with the wonderful qualities of this new breed were published in at least three of our poultry periodicals. Soon, breeders, here and there, began to try them in a somewhat gingerly way, as though rather expecting a gold brick. The great service which this early literature did the breed was to call public attention strongly to it, through what then seemed the exorbitant claims made for these birds as layers.

After a few years Mr. Irving Cook took up this breed, advertising continuously and rather strikingly. As he began the work when young and enthusiastic, and, later, gave his entire strength to his Indian Runner business, the Runners soon found themselves in the midst of a "boom." But even before him several men who still breed the Runners were at work with this breed.

As soon as the breed began to attract keen attention, some breeders who wished to improve it in every possible way began to make inquiries as to its origin. One early breeder who made every effort to get the true history about this time reports that even then "it seemed to be a matter of surmise. All the writers' ideas on the subject seemed to be vague, and many conflicting statements were made." Some of the causes for this haziness and conflict of statement I have been able to run down.

Much misconception arose through an accident. The first two detailed descriptions of the breed which I noted in American publications were from writers across the big waters, one in New Zealand, the other in Ireland. Birds in these countries would naturally have come from England, and be of English type. H. DeCourcy's article was so straightforward and sensible, yet so conservative that it seemed to give the public good ground for confidence in the breed. Unfortunately, this early article gave the West Indies as the original home of the Indian Runner. This statement has been copied by many, while others have given a widely different origin. In a recent circular, the matter was disposed of in this way: "Coming originally from the West Indies, they are a cross of Rouen and Wild Mallard." Of the three supposed facts given here (West Indian origin, Rouen blood, Mallard blood,) probably not one could be proven, though the last might have some credibility through the fact that most breeds of ducks are descended from the Mallard.

I have long suspected that the DeCourcy statement, as printed in this country, was an office, or "proof" error. Trying to get at the facts, I wrote to Mr. DeCourcy in October, 1910, inquiring if this were not the case. The reply was directly to the point: "If my article says 'West' it was a misprint,—or perhaps, a clerical error of mine." As the real, native home of the Indian Runner has long been believed to be the EAST Indies, it is quite easy to see how such an error could arise through the misplacement of a letter or two. At no other period except

when the breed was just being introduced could such an error have worked so much mischief as to the facts*.

Among the early breeders here were Mr. Cook, Mr. Fay Davis, M. V. Decker and, in 1900, A. J. Hallock. Mr. W. Delano's name has also been given me as an early breeder, but I have been unable to get any information from this source. It will be admitted without question, I think, that our one reliance for the early history of the breed IN THIS COUNTRY must be the statements of the earliest breeders.

While the "West Indies story" was going the rounds, with no one contradicting it, and gaining strength through repetition, the British birds were being quietly bred for some time, before the public began to awaken to the value of the Runners. The Davids brothers, of Kansas, began about 1902, Davis in 1897, Hallock in 1900. These three, I know, had their birds from Great Britain. I think there is no room for doubt that all the other early breeders had stock from the same source, either direct or through contemporary breeders. Since it appears that the earliest specimens here came from British sources, it seems to be only ordinary common-sense to take British testimony as to their origin. The English early history—as far as it is history, and not supposition, at least—should be admitted to be the true history. At all events, the guesses and "impressions" of later breeders here, have absolutely no value.

During the season of 1911 not less than 300 breeders have been advertising Indian Runners. There may have been more, but I have a list showing this number. Seven years ago, Reliable

* Although this book has passed through one edition, and although the Secretary of the Indian Runner Duck Club of England has for some time been advertising "new blood direct from the native Indian source," the West Indian story is still being given as to origin. Mr. T. F. McGrew, a man whose word is credited here, is saying that he has investigated, and that he "knows" whereof he speaks, and considers the American Standard bird all right. It thus becomes a question as to whom one will believe: the men who have known the birds for half a life-time and who claim also to have brought them recently from their native home, or one who thinks they do not know what they are talking about!

Poultry Journal—for years a favorite medium with the duck breeders—carried only two Indian Runner advertisements in May in the Classified lists. The Runners have appeared almost wholly in the classified lists; since they seem to have been almost universally welcomed as an accessory to other breeds of fancy fowls. At all events, they have sold so easily that little but classified advertising has been necessary, apparently.

One of the two who were thus advertising in 1903 was Cook. In 1906 he blossomed out as the breeder of "the only true fawn and white colors, and the world's heaviest laying strain." He had, then, five competitors in the classified column. Remembering that this was only five years ago, we may well be amazed at the advance which the Runners have so recently made in public favor. According to these figures, the fawn and white type became "the only true" just about five years ago. It may be remembered, also, that this was the year the Standard which breeders had followed since up to 1910, appeared.

It would seem that, even in Great Britain, the Runners were not well and widely known so very much longer than they have been known here. In 1893, four years before Mr. Davis received his first birds, a book on poultry for profit was put out by a Britisher who had previously written another poultry book, and who might have been thought to be fairly well posted. He mentions only three breeds of ducks, but takes occasion to remark: "It is much to be regretted that no steps have been taken to breed laying strains of ducks."

The history of the Runner in England, however, is easily to be followed back for about twenty-five years. If it becomes hazy as we go farther back, this need not surprise the Yankees who have managed so to conceal their tracks in something like fifteen years that in a new book advertised as the best in America, and giving SIXTEEN ENTIRE LINES to the Runners, it is plainly stated that the origin of these ducks cannot be traced

A Lively Bunch of Half-Waltons

authentically. But a Rouen cross is admitted. Was that Rouen cross a Yankee contribution?

If, as no one really doubts, the Indian Runner Ducks came to us from England, it would seem, indeed, the part of common-sense, and of courtesy no less, to accept the story of their origin as presented by the best and oldest English breeders. American cleverness, however, professes to have discovered that the Britishers, no matter how decent people they be, are presumably equivocating about the origin of the Indian Runner Duck.

The juxtaposition of a quasi-Yankee head and a Belgic head has brought up since 1900 a new story, to the effect that the Britishers did not get their Runners from East India or any other old place whence old sea-captains come out of obscurity, but just across the channel in Belgium! But they have carelessly omitted to tell us how it happened that when those Belgian ducks flew (?) across the channel, they happened to light in County Cumberland, away off to the north-west, as far as possible from Belgium. Frankly, I think this story very far-fetched. For, the English certainly could not be ignorant of the existence of these thousands of Belgian ducks. If they were really the same thing as the Indian Runners it would be well known on both sides of the channel, in which case the only possible conclusion would be that the English breeders have deliberately clouded their origin, then lied about it for these scores of years. I do not believe fair-minded Americans wish to support this unworthy view.

I think it was early in Nov., 1911, that I received from a southern correspondent, a letter stating that a Tennessee breeder had personally told him of seeing Indian Runners in their native home in the East Indies. I wrote the Tennessee man for further information, but my letter was ignored.

On Dec. 2, 1911, nearly a week after the matter for this edition had gone to the printer, a correspondent wrote me as follows: "A few days ago, I got a scorching letter from a cus-

tomer who enclosed a clipping from 'Farm and Fireside.' ". The story told in the clipping followed. I looked it up, finding then that I had seen it and dismissed it as negligible, when it came out, some months previous. It was a simple story, told by an English woman now living in Virginia, of how she had suggested the name for the Runners, nearly thirty years ago, because of the "celebrated runner, an Indian, named Deerfoot," the world's champion long-distance runner at that time.

The inevitable "old sea captain" (another one!) figured in this story as the source from whence the ducks came. But the one point needing special notice is that the Virginian lady stated she, herself, "sent eggs and the breed all over the world, some very early to Belgium and Holland, France and Germany." She also affirmed: "There are no Runners in India, only what went from England to a Maharajah, sent by Mr. J. H. Wilson, a great poultry enthusiast, who was also a breeder and exhibitor and judge, and was instrumental in getting the Indian Runner Club formed."

Mr. Wilson was an early Sec'y of the Club in England—doubtless the first. We may call him as witness that at least one inference which has been drawn from this story is not valid: Fortunately, a letter from him is in existence in America, dating back some years, in which Mr. Wilson stated that to his own knowledge, his strain had not *then* been crossed for fifty years. It can be only the name that is but thirty years old, in any event.

It comes back to the conclusion which I have more than once suggested: viz., that the question is, in essence, simply one of whom we elect to believe, when those who "know" tell stories of such opposite tenor. It is not impossible that the Virginian named the Runners, unless we can prove that they bore this name earlier than thirty years ago. It has been stated that they bore other, early names. But, if the above story of names and shipments be true, it disproves rather effectually some prominent stories about "the sham Indian Runner." Yet, if true, why—

why did none of these Holland, Belgian and German ducks bear the name "Indian Runner" from the first? And why does that "best authority," Mr. L. Van der Snickt, say that "the same duck" has been "selected for centuries" in Holland, Belgium and France?

English History, Views and Standard

CHAPTER II

After we trace back to a certain period, or, possibly, forty years or so, the history of the Indian Runner in England becomes somewhat hazy. English breeders say that the earliest literature on the breed—or, at least, that which goes farthest back, is a little treatise by John Donald, who lived in County Cumberland, where the breed was first known. In this book, Mr. Donald states that the Indian Runners were brought to England by a sea captain, about sixty years before his book was written. H. DeCourcy, of Ireland, a writer whom we know quite well in America—thinks it is now twenty years since he first saw this (undated) book. This would make it eighty years since the breed first made any history in England that is now remembered—a period so remote that none would now be alive who had personal knowledge of the facts and of its introduction and earliest history.

One of the English treatises, "The Indian Runner," was written by Jacob Thomlinson, who first knew this duck in County

Cumberland. He refers to Mr. Donald's (earlier) work, and also to a brief treatise by Mr. Henry Digby, giving credit to these men for all items not within his own, personal knowledge. The illustrations in the Thomlinson pamphlet are from drawings by Mr. J. W. Walton, Secretary of the present Indian Runner Duck Club. "They give," says Mr. Thomlinson, "a clear insight of what a TRUE Runner SHOULD and SHOULD NOT be."

The models from which these pictures were drawn "have won prizes at the great National Shows." They were intended to be used as "a guide to both old and new fanciers, to obtain a more uniform idea of type and standard." This shows how English breeders regard Mr. Walton's drawings, and how they defer to his knowledge of the breed.

Mr. Thomlinson's own knowledge of the breed reached back thirty years, but his treatise was also undated. However, he gives us a point to rest on by saying that he first took "particular notice" of these birds in 1884, when one duck made for him a record of 180 eggs. As this "completely overshadowed" other breeds, it was the foundation of Mr. Thomlinson's vital interest in the Indian Runners.

From the fact that Mr. Donald was a resident of County Cumberland, the original seat of Indian Runner culture in England, it seemed to follow that he was most likely to be right as to their origin, and it was to him that the earlier English breeders looked very largely for information.

The power of the true Indian Runner to stamp its color and marking, in the case of a cross, is taken as evidence of very long fixation of its characteristics in the native state. Eighty per cent of such progeny, it is said will favor the Runner, especially in characteristic color. This varies considerably above the proportion given by Mendel's law.

English breeders seem willing to allow that the long neglect has made it almost certain that many types would appear in various parts of the Island; for, the original blood must have

been largely tainted during the slowness of the nation to recognize the peculiar value of the breed, and to place it early under the care of some organization which would watch out for the preservation of its most valuable and vital characteristics. Like the Rhode Island Red in this country, the breed had a sadly neglected youth.

Quite a number of importations have in later years, been made into this country from the flocks of Mr. J. W. Walton, "Honorable Secretary" of the Indian Runner Duck Club of England. Mr. Walton says that the best birds have always been in a very few hands. He wrote me, personally, that even in England "breeders, exhibitors and judges fell into nearly every possible trouble with Indian Runners and reduced them from an outstanding and most distinctive bird to a common type, small, cross-bred duck with fairly even markings. That was the Exhibition Runner (?) of eight or nine years ago. 100 per cent of American (Standard-bred) Runners and 99 per cent of English are wrong in shape, and position of legs. Color without type is of no value."

Mr. Walton has also said that it was quite certain that many earlier judges of Indian Runners "had no acquaintance with the genuine Runner." It was under this strained situation that the Indian Runner Duck Club in England took up the work, and formed a Standard calculated to preserve the distinctiveness of this most remarkable breed. The birds illustrated in English poultry journals at about this time, according to Mr. Walton, "showed strong evidence of Mallard blood."

It was within the decade before the English breeders found their bearings that most of our earlier importations were made. This shows how strong was the probability that many of these earlier importations were of mixed blood. It was about or just previous to this time that the Indian Runner Duck Club intervened to save the Runners from extinction as to their most distinctive characteristics. It superseded the Standard

formed by Mr. Donald and Mr. Digby, (with which there had been dissatisfaction for some time) by one better designed "to retain the valuable utility and artistic qualilties" of the breed. A part of its object, as stated, was to keep the exhibition of the Runner "free from dishonorable and fraudulent practices."

In order to get at the English ideal of shape, it may be well to give a word to "the old, cod, soda-water bottle." This bottle, whose form is given as a general model to work toward, tapered toward each end. The taper is gradual, in the bird, from the thighs back. Mention is made of the funnel-like expansion where neck passes into body. The accepted angle of carriage is up to sixty-five degrees when the bird is traveling, and from this to seventy-five degrees when alert. The neck is a strong feature, the head and neck together carrying thirty points. LENGTH, THINNESS, and FINENESS are especially demanded. In these points, the great majority of American Runners fail, breeders seeming to overlook the added beauty and grace given by a slender neck.

I shall not try to give the English Standard demands in their entirety, but will refer to those which need study, in view of the swinging away in type and color by the American Standard, and by the birds shown in America. The color demanded in contrast with the white is a fawn, rather warm and soft, sometimes expressed also as of "ginger color," a term which the American breeders have adopted, but which I have not seen in the American shows. The newest males shown here are decidedly of a pinkish, rather than ginger tone, a shade which carries directly toward the claret which is disqualified by the American Standard. The color is required to be uniform, from surface to skin.

The chief variations between color-tones, from English and American points of view, are in the head and rump of the drake and the body, fawn color and overlay on the shoulders. The last point is often strong in color, the pencilings being rather

distinct, but they are supposed to blend into a warm fawn of the true shade desired, when seen from a short distance away. The trick in getting color on the English-bred Runner, is to get one tone a good ginger, and the other as near it as is possible, the outer portion being the lighter. As this is the portion most visible on the breast and body, it gives the appearance of evenness, as soon as the new coat loses a little in strength of color. If too weak in color when the new coat is first donned, it will be washy in the extreme after a few weeks, and will well justify the term so often applied to the lighter birds bred to American Standard, "a dirty white." This loss of color is one of the worst things that can befall a true Runner. I am loath to use the word "true" at all in speaking of the Runners, since it has been so juggled and made to mean such widely different things. "Genuine" might, perhaps, be a better term.

The full stern of the upturning, Pekin type, is considered a defect, although weight here cannot be allowed to count strongly against females that have laid one or two seasons. The rump of the male and its head may be of a dull, rather bronzy green.

The English Standard lays emphasis on the point that type must receive greater consideration than color or markings. Short, thick necks, squat specimens, smallness at the expense of the long shape, are decided defects. Slate and dark red in drakes are not favored.

It should be perfectly plain to any normal mind that the English type of Indian Runner, being so much older than anything in America, justly lays claim to the title of "The True Indian Runner." There are many breeders in America who are breeding as nearly as possible to the English (genuine) Standard, possibly yielding a very little on color in order not to have a bird too widely different from the one demanded by the American Standard. Up to 1910, (so convinced were many of our judges, even, that the American Standard was not re-

quiring the true type) the English-bred birds have been able to get, in some instances, very good prizes, though not often the best. In Jan., 1910, such a male bird took second at Madison Square Garden. From what I hear, I judge that the ax is to be applied to such birds at future shows. The new Standard is silent except as its requirement of "fawn" may be regarded as penalizing two shades of fawn. The revision committee, it was reported, did declare against "concentric penciling," whatever that may be taken to mean.

"Whose birds was the American Standard made to fit?" asked a correspondent, suspiciously, not long ago. The only testimony given to the public on this point inheres in the advertisements of two of them at the time of the change, that ONLY their birds met the requirements of the new revision!

For months before the latest revision of the American Standard of Perfection, a sustained fight was made to educate the public, and incidentally, the Revision Committee, up to a knowledge of the real type of the genuine Indian Runners, and of the injury the proposed action would be to the breeders of the English type, and to the breed. Perhaps a dozen breeders took part in this, one being a poultry judge. But the Standard had called for an entirely different type for so many years, that the Revisers were simply afraid to give any recognition to the breeders of the genuine Indian Runners. Indeed, it was scarcely to be expected that the Standard-makers would so publicly acknowledge a sustained error. Moreover, the known custom in this country, with all breeds, of making the Standard to fit the aims and ideals of the greatest number of the more powerful breeders, stood in the way. It is no doubt true that there are more of the present breeders who favor the "plain" type of solid fawn, with white, than of the breeders who favor the penciled fawn type. This penciled type is not insistently penciled in the favored specimens, except when the feathers are first grown, but is rather dimly penciled in two shades so harmonious and

so near together in tone that they gently blend into a color which appears as a solid color as the season advances. The cuts shown herewith, of birds soon after molting, will easily give proof of this.

The extreme Standard weight in this country is four pounds for females and four and one-half pounds for matured males. I have seen English males weighing five and one-half pounds, but this is not common. Five pounds is reasonably common.

The preferred weights mentioned in the (present) English Standard are three and one-half to four pounds for ducks, four to five pounds for drakes. Head, bill, eyes and neck take nearly one-third the points in the English Standard; body, shape and carriage together comprise 45 points—nearly one-half the exhibition value—while color, markings and condition receive the other 25 points. That is, color, even with marking and condition added, counts only one-fourth the show value.

I have never noted in the ranks of the breeders of the original variety, any feeling of enmity toward the favored American type, in itself. But the feeling is very general—I think I may say, fairly universal—that the breed name belongs of right to the original type. The other should have come in, if come it must, as a second variety, with a variety name. It is precisely as though the Silver Penciled Wyandotte should attempt to push aside the original Silver Wyandotte, and make insistent claim to being "the only true Wyandotte." Surely "SHAPE makes the breed, color (only) the variety." Is it not so, breeders?

It is the great hope of those who are breeding really good Runners of the White-egg type, that our Standard makers may undergo an operation for strabismus before the time of the next revision. We'd like them to SEE STRAIGHT!

In November, 1910, after the first edition of this book had gone to the printers, English interest in Indian Runners was keyed up by a sensational exhibit at the Crystal Palace Show. This exhibit was made in the name of Mr. J. W. Walton, and

consisted of a team of amazing Indian Runner ducks shown there. Mr. Walton gained *all five* prizes *in each class.* The authoritative report in "The Feathered World," London, said, concerning this sweeping victory: "And well he might, if an upright carriage has anything to do with the qualifications of a Runner. There's an old saying, 'Like water off a duck's back', but I fail to see how it could be applied to, say, the second prize drake, for he stood so absolutely perpendicular, I doubt if any water could possibly get there in order to run off again; if it did, the process would be a decidedly rapid one."

The females were described as of "a soft, sweet shade, *between* a fawn and a buff, with exquisite lacing throughout." (Those who contend for the greater beauty of the solid fawn, should note how our English fellow-breeders regard the lacing, or penciling.) The especially upright carriage characterized all the birds of this "wonderful" team, the best specimen being described thus: "This bird, when the least disturbed or excited, stood perfectly erect, tail down between legs, a level line down back from head to tip of tail." The reporter spoke of meeting one onlooker who said jokingly that he "should always dread the danger of the bird falling backward."

Doubtless this gentleman had the right point of view, as a bird not absolutely erect would give a better impression, and, possibly, when we get past the point where we *must stress uprightness* so much, we shall not admire most the bird which looks to be in danger of overbalance backward.

Mr. Walton is somewhat reticent about these *mysterious* Runners. He has felt so strongly the danger to the breed from a certain attitude in England which led nearly to its ruin, some years ago, that he resolved to keep full control over the new "wonder" ducks, in his own hands and those of one or two friends, who have worked with him, till its characteristics were well impressed on the best of the earlier stock. None of the birds was offered for sale at the Palace Show, the prohibitive price of a thousand guineas each being catalogued.

Now, however, the Secretary of the English I. R. Duck Club is offering "real Indian Runners from the purest descendants of the old stock, and new blood from the native Indian source." The Challenge Cup and the International Crystal Palace Medal and many other Palace wins gained by Mr. Walton's birds are simply material proofs of the value in which his birds are held by the best Indian Runner experts of Britain. I have considered it necessary to mention and to stress these facts and these proofs, since Belgian "authorities" have persisted in claiming that the so-called Indian Runners were only an inferior type of a common Belgian Duck. On the strength of this, two or three in this country who should know better have talked far too much about the "Sham Indian Runners," the "popular fallacy" (?) that the Indian Runners came from India, and the "careless and unreliable" people who have ventured not to agree with these same unwise "expert" (?) talkers.

The particular talker who said: "There is absolutely no foundation to the many statements that the race came from either the East or West Indies," should perhaps think a bit before writing more about the Indian Runners. It is rather difficult to convince those *who have the birds* and who know where they got them (after innumerable difficulties and disappointments, and several futile attempts, as Mr. Walton says) that they don't exist, and that they don't come from there "anny-how"!

It was the same talker, too, who came out plump with the statement that Mr. Donald, through his booklet, "was strongly active in *clouding the real cradle* of the Runners, by claiming that they were first imported into England in an India ship. He is also father to the statement that Rouen blood was used in getting larger size, thus necessitating the disqualification for claret breast. Concerning the remark about Mr. Donald, Mr. Walton says: "So far from Donald's pamphlet clouding their origin, if it had not been for that pamphlet the new birds might

never have been located and secured. Donald's pamphlet is vindicated and his facts in the main substantiated. The early birds, without a doubt, came by an India ship; and the assertion that Donald clouded the cradle of the Runners is absolutely unwarranted and untrue. The reverse is the fact. X—(the talker) by his own writings proves that he, for one, knows nothing about the Indian Runner. From first to last, his article is wrong, and how any one with such ignorance of Indian Runners could profess to correct others is beyond my comprehension."

The above facts go to show that the modern English type of Indian Runner, beautifully penciled (or laced, as the words have come to be almost interchangeably used) very erect in carriage, and racy in type, is immovably fixed as the real distinctive and charming correct type of Indian Runner. To it belongs the breed name; to it, the first place. *Others must follow it,* as variations upon its excellent characteristics, and must come purely as varieties. If to say this be "partisan," surely it is the only logical partisanship, and precisely in line with our American Standard rulings concerning breeds and varieties.

There is one point in especial about the carriage of the Indian Runners, to which I want to direct attention. The most distinctive, characteristic Runner pose may be compared to that of a pointer dog. When the bird is quickened to alertness by eagerness or by danger, the back stiffens and becomes almost a straight line from head to stern. Only a few of the best ducks in America show this pose, as far as I have seen them. A very large number have an angle at base of neck, which makes the bird appear ungainly. Many do not apprehend this as a defect, if the head is held high. But the head may be very high, yet the bird may not show more than 45 degrees of erectness in the body, and when this is the case, the angle at base of neck is very unpleasantly prominent. Sometimes the head will be carried high, while the body is held less than at an angle of 45. The lower the body, in proportion, the more prominent the angle.

I have discarded elegant birds in shape and otherwise, because of this one fault. It will be a long time before all our birds or even a majority of them show the straight line of back, but it is what we ought to work toward. When a bird can "point" nearly vertical in pose, then we have what I consider a bird of good carriage. For some reason, this pose does not seem to come as naturally to the males as to the females. At least, many more of the females I have seen show it, when excited.

The Present Show Quality of American Standard Runners

CHAPTER III

The American Standard type of Indian Runners, as seen in the best shows, is not only a different type of bird from the English Runner, but it is in the main decidedly different from the ideal which has, up to the present date of writing, been pictured and described in the American Standard of Perfection. The ideals of the breeders have been gradually changing, as to color, and the birds that win now are quite different in color from those that won a few years ago. The allowance of gray for so many years, as well as the preferred fawn, while possibly it seemed necessary at the beginning, has not worked to the good of the breed. A far larger proportion of males still come with gray breasts than would have been the case could the Standard have demanded, from the first, that fawn should be the one color, without the gray as an alternate.

I have studied much over the peculiar demands at some points of the American Standard of Perfection, in its dealing with Indian Runners. Its ideal pictures in the 1905 American Standard are near the demands for good Runners, as laid down

by the English Standard. At two points in the description, however, the American demand swings quite away from the English. Where the latter calls for legs placed well back, and makes legs placed too wide apart a defect, the American Standard demands legs "set well apart." And whereas the English Standard calls for bronzy green on the head and rump of male the American Standard has demanded as the ideal, for the 5 years previous to 1910 a light fawn color, which must be even throughout the entire plumage, except where the white markings should be seen.

The American demand for "light fawn" has now been modified to "fawn" and the color is really a peculiar, almost indescribable light pinky-brown. It is, without doubt, a beautiful color and very much admired; but so much had everything been subordinated to color-tone of the "fawn" that the winning birds at the great New York State Fair, in September, 1910, showed nasty, white splotches in the fawn, spoiling the color-marking most decidedly.

In November, 1910, I went to the earlier show held in New York, chiefly to study the Indian Runners. These picked birds were mainly very good in the even color now preferred for both sexes—really a handsome pinkish fawn. Only a few were good in carriage; scarcely one had a fine neck; and fully thirty per cent were notably splashed with white in the fawn of the back. A neck defect which breeders have not seemed to take into account (the proof being that it is so general) is that, the neck being already too short and thick, is made to look shorter and thicker by having the dividing line between the colors too high. It is often cut squarely, but in about one-third the single specimens shown, there was only about an inch to an inch-and-a-half between the cheek marking and the fawn of the lower neck. The Walton ideal sketch shows the white on a slender neck and nearly five-eighths the length of the fawn marking on the side of the breast, at the point where it extends

entirely to the square cut in marking across the breast. This gives a widely different appearance to the bird.

The illustrations of Indian Runners in the poultry publications generally, up to 1909, were not of a sort to furnish much of an ideal to breeders in general. There were a few birds of typical carriage in this country. (Even in 1911 they are still comparatively few; I mean of those which will hold the high carriage practically all the time). The photographs from life commonly published, gave little hint of the Runner which the "Ideal" in the 1905 Standard showed. The new Standard contains a new and improved "ideal." Some years ago, Mrs. Mabel Feint made a pencil sketch from life which was very good for the time, though a trifle too full in breast, not showing the straight under line of body which is typical of the real Runner, and which even the American Standard "Ideal" demands. This cut is still in use in some quarters. The photographs I have seen, even up to the present time, have not been, as a rule, as good as Mrs. Feint's "Ideal." She was a breeder of Runners for some years, and the birds she carried are still bred as a distinct strain. In her time, these won over many of those from the more prominent breeders. The American type of birds are claimed to be "sports" from birds imported from England. Inasmuch as English breeders, for many of the earlier years, flirted with the solid-color will-o'-the-wisp, it would not be at all strange if some of the birds from England at that early date should throw sports. But the better English breeders have long decried and regretted their waste of time, and the detriment they worked the breed for a period before they learned to breed strictly to the typical color.

One needs to handle Runners for some time, and learn their typical carriage and their habits of behavior at different periods of growth not only, but at different stages, in order to criticise them fairly. Probably it has occurred to very few that it is almost impossible for a laying bird to hold her typical

carriage and form. There is abundant reason for this, with the Runners. A single I. Runner egg ready for exclusion, is likely to weigh three ounces, and the ducks are quite reasonably likely to lay six days out of seven, during at least a portion of the year. Prof. James E. Rice, by experiment, found that a color-fed hen deposited some fourteen layers in the formation of an egg, showing that *this* egg had been fourteen days in growing from the pin-head ovule to the two-ounce product of average exclusion. If we might suppose a duck to be 14 days in growing an egg, from the beginning to its readiness for exclusion, and laying six eggs in a week, she must be carrying within her narrow body, at one time, twelve eggs, of diminishing sizes from the three-ounce finished product, to the tiny, but enlarging ovule of the egg cluster. It is, of course, impossible to conceive that such a weight of eggs should not change both the shape and the carriage of the female, for the time being. Thus it comes about that we have to speak of these birds as in "exhibition form" and "laying form," while there is still another period of nearly half a year, during which they eat so much that they appear rather logy, and assume the carriage of maturity only at intervals. This is during their growth toward maturity, and we need for this period a third term, such as "growing form," to describe them then.

One of my correspondents who is very anxious for the true Indian Runner to become well known and well liked, rather regretted the fact that Mr. J. W. Walton's pen pictures of ideal Runners were published in this country, since they show such an exaggerated type to American eyes that those buyers without experience would be dissatisfied with any average Runner that could now be sent them. I may say, however, that in my experience, no fowl ever sent out has given such good, general satisfaction as the type of penciled Runners now bred in this country. Nearly all the letters of acknowledgment which I receive, as well as those which other breeders have shown me,

express the greatest satisfaction with the average birds. A short time ago, I saw one which read thus: "I have never received anything by express which gave me so much satisfaction and delight as the coop of Indian Runners you sent me." These were the average run of low priced birds, say at about two dollars each.

There is a reason for this in the fact that, although but few of the Runners hold the distinctive carriage all the time, and, being few, are held for the high prices, yet the average Runner will almost invariably show off nicely whenever frightened, or excited or free to run and pose. And I have never known any breed which seemed to possess so much of interest for its breeders, whether they were, or were not, finished fanciers.

But, there is much more to the question of true type in Indian Runners than has yet appeared in our survey. More and more, as the years pass, are fanciers falling into line on the declaration that no breed can survive long and prosper, even as a fancy fowl, unless it is first a capital utility fowl. This may be called, I think, a foundation tenet of The Fancy at the present time. Few advertisers permit themselves to put forth any claims to trade without supporting them strongly with testimony and assertion as to the superior utility value of their breed, and especially of their particular strain of that breed. Even the story of the superlative fancy value of the "$10,000 hen" must be buttressed by the statement that her progeny lay at the rate of 83 eggs in four months; and is not this by implication, 249 eggs a year, with chances of 250 in leap years?

It goes without saying, almost, that the Indian Runner, being a champion layer and a prolific breeder, will soon cease to be of much use to The Fancy, through sheer over-production, unless the farmers awake very widely to its value. The Indian Runner must become—and that very soon—the farmer's duck.

In the Runner camp, a rumble has been growing for some

little time. During 1910 it rose almost to a roar. The Runner of the emasculated type called for by the American Standard of Perfection, although lovely to look upon for color, in its best estate, has a great weakness as a producer of eggs for market, in the fact that it laid a large proportion of green eggs (a few call them "blue"). It does not need much argument, I think, to convince any one with an unbiased mind that the crystal-white egg produced by the English Standard Runner is far and away more desirable for a market egg than one tinted more or less deeply with green.

A breeder of American Standard Runners, having had much trouble and complaint regarding the large output of green eggs, wrote to another asking counsel, and saying, among other things, that the green-egg type were not so good layers as the others. The attitude of the recipient of this letter is shown in a brief paragraph from the reply: "It is said in England fully 80 per cent of the (so-called) Indian Runners have very little Indian Runner blood in them, and a still worse condition prevails here, because of our Standard. Owing to this Standard, there are very few genuine Indian Runners to be found."

This sweeping statement harks back to the fact that English breeders, as I have noted above, tried so hard to "improve" their Runners that they nearly ran them into the ground, and came near losing the real Runner completely. At present, not only in England, but in her colonies, the feeling of the better breeders against any admixture of outside blood is intense. In Australia, the birds that won in the great competition were English, Standard-bred Runners. Mr. Dunnicliffe, the secretary for the competitions, as I note elsewhere, told me personally that nothing else will be accepted in Australia.

Comparison of English and American Types

CHAPTER IV

For a breed that is sweeping the country with such amazing swiftness, the Indian Runner had received up to 1910 far too little really critical attention. It has been bred in England several times as many years as it has been noticed and bred here, and in both countries one craze of the average breeder seems to have been to modify it in order to get more size. This is folly, even from the utility point of view, for the minute you increase size you increase eating capacity, and eating capacity beyond what is needed to produce flesh and eggs is dead against economy in an animal that has a specific, great point, like the egg-laying tendency of the Indian Runner.

Many breeders of the Indian Runner have been calling attention to the proud fact that Indian Runners won the Australian Contest prize with a marvelous record, as announced a year ago. But the majority of them have not a shadow of right to use this as a talking point for their birds, since it was not the American Standard Runner which made these records.

Believing that this was the fact, I wrote, some time ago, to Mr. Dunnicliffe, Organizing Secretary, in connection with the Hawkesbury contests, asking him what kind of Runners were in these Australian contests. He very kindly wrote me the facts, which supported my belief. These are his exact words: "The Indian Runners kept in Australia have been bred from stock imported from England. The English Standard is followed by all our poultry clubs and shows. As is the case elsewhere, there are people here who breed Rouen blood into them to improve the size, but any trace of this blood in them would knock them out in the shows. In the matter of laying, we find that any infusion of Rouen blood depreciates them, and the best laying records have been put up by birds of pure, English blood, selected here for many years for their laying capacity."

The American Indian Runner, being bred to our Standard, is a much modified bird. The distinctive Runner shape has been subordinated to color, the color lightened, and the value as a layer lessened, all in order to get a plain contrast to the white, instead of a penciled one. Perhaps the new manufacture is prettier; since beauty is largely a matter of opinion, I will not question that. But we have lost three or four most valuable characteristics in getting it. The English breeders who at one period thoughtlessly risked all these to get size, have more excuse, since they thought this an economic advance.

Within a few days, during 1910, I received two letters, both from strangers, on the lookout for white-egg Runners. One of them said that he had been buncoed, for his "fawn and white" ducks were all colors, many being white. The other wrote: "I got 100 eggs of ————————, this spring, ordering white, but getting mixed colors and small eggs, and most of the ducklings were white. I sent to ————————, and got fine layers of large, pale green and white eggs." One of the firms mentioned by this correspondent was a Chicago winner, the year

he bought, and the other a firm that has had more write-ups and free readers and puffs than most of the other well-known water-fowl breeders put together. And I call attention to the fact that there were two distinct types, from these two different breeders of American "fawns", into one, at least, of which white blood had been introduced. Neither of them was of the true, white-egg type.

There is one specific point, viz., length—about the genuine Runner, aside from the carriage, which up to 1910 was scarcely referred to in periodicals in this country, although the Standard does say that the birds shall be long and narrow. The long birds were frequently downed at New York in favor of those showing the light, even fawn, evenness of color seeming to be the chief item in a good Runner, from the American point of view, in addition to good carriage. Some of our show birds do have fine carriage.

The English Standard gives something definite to go on, in stating what should be considered "fairly good weights and lengths;" though it cautions that these must not count alone, but must be in connection with well balanced type. It also recommends that judges *see the birds on the run* before making awards. But I think these "fair" lengths will open the eyes of our breeders. They are: 25 to 30 inches for ducks, and 28 to 36 inches for the drakes. Runners, *by the yard,* as one might say!

The stern, too, is very different from the Pekin type so often seen here in the winners. Birds that have laid for a considerable time do get heavier at the rear, but the true shape is quite light at the stern, tapering from the thighs to the tail. This, with the length and carriage gives a bird whose distinctiveness differentiates it from all other types the minute the eye falls on it. This, to my mind, is what we want, especially as this is the heavy laying type in this breed, according to testimony.

Judge Clipp has said publicly: "Consulting the numerous breeders of this famous duck during the show season, nine out

of ten would admit that those of the penciled variety were the best layers." He also said: "I doubt if there is another fowl in existence that will lay as many eggs during the year as the Indian Runner. Even the Leghorn must take off her hat to the Indian Runner duck." Mr. Clipp speaks as a breeder, as well as a judge.

Mr. Scott, of New Zealand, calls the I. R. the "Queen of Layers," and states that his best bird gave him nearly $10.00 worth of eggs in one year. The average price was about 37½c per dozen, according to his report of his "World's Record." Of course, he does not breed the American Runner.

What might be considered to be a mongrel Runner? One, surely, which had been outbred strongly. What does the Buff Orpington Duck claim to be? A cross, *having Runner blood.* Since we already have a mongrel Runner with a breed name, (The Buff Orpington) let us beware lest we make the Indian Runner itself a mongrel by adding other blood, no matter of what name. The true Runner is so distinctive that it is more easily injured by outcrosses, it seems to me, than any other breed could possibly be.

It was certainly not *more* than 13 years after Mr. Thomlinson's first "particular attention" that the first birds were imported into this country. This makes it very probable indeed that the earlier birds imported into America, were very poor birds, from the present point of view of the English Indian Runner Duck Club. As they have been bred to the American Standard now for a number of years, it is perfectly fair to conclude that few or none of the English Standard-bred ducks have been imported in recent years. This would follow from the fact that Americans were breeding away from the English Standard, and breeding, as is claimed, a sport. I except, of course, those who are frankly breeding to the English Standard because they believe it more nearly correct. In Mr. Thomlinson's book appears a portrait of a Canadian duck, "never beaten

in Canada," sketched—as a warning—by the Secretary of the English I. R. Club. The faults especially named are bad carriage, and "wide on legs." The width between legs and the solid fawn which the American ideal *demands,* are regarded by the English as decidedly detrimental to the breed. "If the legs are placed wide apart, you are certain to get a waddler instead of a Runner, and if not placed well back you get horizontal carriage," says Mr. Thomlinson. It is true that the English Standard demands an *appearance* of uniformity of the darker markings in the body color of the female, but it states with equal distinctness that these feathers may carry two tones, one described as "soft fawn," the other as penciling which is "brighter and warmer in tint," (Another shade of fawn, in fact). It avers that the overlapping of the feathers makes the females *appear* almost solid fawn, quite even in tone. This question does not come up with regard to the drakes, as they do not show penciling, in either the American or the English type.

I wish more especially, however, to lay emphasis on the difference between the two types from the utility standpoint, for here, I believe, the real fight is to be made. Numbers of breeders who have had both types affirm that the English Standard-bred Runners are better layers; laying earlier, more in numbers, larger eggs, and eggs of better color. The Indian Runners of the best English type lay eggs of a transparent whiteness not seen, so far as I know, in any other eggs offered for table use in the regular markets. They average three ounces, when the birds are well kept and matured. And, they are superior to hens' eggs for nearly all sorts of cooking.

The American Standard-bred ducks, as a whole, lay a considerable proportion of green eggs, though the flocks vary, possibly, in this. At least, some breeders send out less than others. I fancy, too, that they make some careful discrimination: one breeder sent eggs to the then President of the American Poultry Association, which the latter reported as being less than three

per cent. green; while to another, who was a lesser light, were sent by the same breeder, a lot containing so many green eggs that the breeder was in utter despair, and forthwith turned about and bought eggs for hatching, of the English-bred type, by the hundreds, hatching until late in the season in order to get enough. I have read the original letters giving these facts.

A letter from Connecticut, received after the hatching season of 1910, runs as follows: "This spring, I set a 240-egg incubator with so-called Indian Runner ducks. Some of the eggs were white, but the majority green. The ducklings are most anything in color, from white to light fawn. I don't want an Indian Runner Duck on my place that lays a green egg. The only thing I am after is ducks that lay white eggs and are prolific layers." The demand for the white eggs *only* is growing so strong that both the utility man and the breeder of high-grade Standard exhibition birds are demanding guarantees that the strain shall lay strictly-white eggs. The only type that comes anywhere near this, so far as any testimony I have seen or heard, to date, goes, is the type bred to the English Standard. Those raisers who are breeding to the American Standard are promising themselves that they can breed out the green egg by strict selection. Some aver that they have already done it. I do not say that this is impossible; but any one knows that it must be a process of years.

Calling attention again to the fact that the ducks in the Australian competition—vide Mr. Dunnicliffe's letter—were English Standard-bred Indian Runners, I will note a few statements that have been made as to laying capacity of the Indian Runners —the *English* Indian Runners, I mean. For, I do not think there is a certified record published for the American type. It will be noticed in practically all references to the laying capacity of the Runners, in this country, that little mention is made of the records made in the yards of the writers thereof. These figures are simply copied. A large proportion of all the figures

given have come from across the water. One big record came from New Zealand; one came from Ireland; several came from Australia. I have two official records made in public work; also, one, made by Mr. De Courcy's ducks; one, made by English bred ducks of an American breeder; one, made in England by Mr. Thomlinson's ducks. The last-named record is 180, made in 1884. Mr. Thomlinson states that he has had a few exceed this in later years. The half-Walton's have a record of 185 in nine months, made on a northern American farm. The Australian Competition, a public, official report from birds handled at an Agricultural College, has been for three successive years reported as an average of above 200, without meat, and last made by two pens.

Private claims, for which, so far as I know, no proof is shown, run winningly from 204 and 209 to 240, 260, 280, and 288. Several breeders claim ducks having a record above 200; one states that his birds lay all winter, and one refers modestly to one of his ducks with a record of 200 eggs in nine and one-half months. This is only 21 a month; many Runners are fully equal to this, during the favorable months. The rub is to get it during December and the moulting period. The 288 record hails from England, and I do not know what proofs have been given as to its authenticity. But, at least, the "plain-clothes" men, (those who want the plain fawn and white demanded by the American Standard) cannot consistently claim it, as it was made by a "different" duck.

During 1910, I tried for many months to find some verification of a record, reported here in 1909, of 320 eggs from one Indian Runner Duck in a single year. At first, it was reported here that this record was made in Australia. It was thought to be a public record. Late in 1910, an English writer and traveller wrote me that he had seen this duck, about which all the Runner world was agog. He wrote: "I had the pleasure of seeing the record duck while I was in New Zealand, as I went to see

the plant of its owner. * * * It is his 'Wonder' strain and laid 320 eggs in 365 days, and 512 eggs in 23 months, going through two complete moults. He had six 'Little Wonders,' bred from this one, entered in the Cambridge Laying Competition, which were only four and one-half to five and one-half months old when entered, and had gone through a complete moult. When I left, had put up the good total of 900 eggs in seven months, notwithstanding these obstacles; the last twelve weeks' totals averaging over thirty-nine."

I have not seen any of Mr. Scott's ducks, but the photographs show them to be fair to good in carriage, but rather heavy in type. Naturally, a record so far beyond what we have been accustomed to think possible raises many eyebrows among us. Mr. Scott claims to have five strains, each of which has made a record of above 200 eggs average, "equal to and over the 300-egg record." He tells of a bird which laid 202 when from 3½ to 4½ years old; and of three which laid 200 eggs each in eight and one-half months.

It could not be expected that birds placed in competition many miles away from home, in strange hands, could do as well as they would do at home, under the owner's careful eye and hand. But the Cambridge Duck Egg-Laying Test reports, through its Secretary, that six Scott birds from four and one-half months old to five and one-half months old when entering the tests, and moulting twice during the year, made a total of 1301 eggs for the year, "and for 12 weeks averaged over 39 eggs per week." This is the pen mentioned above by my correspondent. This average means thirteen eggs per duck in each two weeks, for twelve weeks in succession. It is the Indian Runner Ducks' strongest bid for universal notice!

Personally, I would rather rest the case of the Indian Runner on this record, and the more than 200-egg record of the Australian Agr'l. College *tests for three years in succession.*

It seems, however, that there is no limit that can be set to

the claims. One photograph which I have seen purports to be of a Runner "from a gentleman that guaranteed that she laid 339 eggs in 365 days during her first season's laying." Most of her eggs were reported infertile. Perhaps this *is* the real limit!

Naturally, Mr. Scott, although he raises Buff Orpington Ducks and Wyandotte hens, regards the Indian Runner as "the Queen of Layers." He also says that all the Wyandottes reserved for breeders in his pens for 1911 have laid over 200 eggs each. He is a great believer in strain and stamina, and in bringing birds to maturity before permitting them to begin laying. In connection with the chapter on feeding, I give his method and kinds of feed used. And, if any one is getting too enthusiastic over Runners, I will try to balance him a bit by referring him to Mr. Rigg, who says that the Runner's laying capacity has been overrated.

Doubtless, the majority of people are unaware that our veteran, Mr. I. K. Felch, furnished a sworn record, some years ago, of a Light Brahma hen having laid 313 eggs in one year. I am certain that the average Indian Runner duck will come nearer her "Wonder" average than will any breed of hens to the "wonder" record for hens. I know of one published record for an American hen, higher than this duck record, but it was not a sworn record, as far as I know.

Straight to the point testimony from the people who are in the midst of the work, and who have to meet difficulties at every turn is one of the most valuable things we can have to give light on mooted points. Extracts from some other of the letters which came to me during 1910 will show further how people regard the two types. The Vice-President of one of the poultry clubs writes: "Give the public what it wants and what is right, but do not try to educate it up to take only what we have to offer, because it is a fad. People want something that will reproduce itself, and the light fawn color won't do it."

From the far west, a man of convictions writes: "Throwing out the penciled type is an injustice to all its breeders as

well as to the true breed; it is tearing down what we have been building up for years. Our own ducks have won over all kinds of so-called Indian Runners, scoring to ninety-six and a half and ninety-six and three fourths at state shows. We have been breeding this English type for eight years, *and find no fault in them,* while the fawn and white proved worthless under the same conditions. Why should the Revision Committee wipe *either* the English type or the American type off the face of the American soil?" Please note that this letter was neither written for publication, nor for advertising, but is the outspoken expression of a man's belief, which he supports by his practice. He says, also, in the course of his letter, that the American type "has neither carriage nor egg-laying qualities."

If any are prompted to deny this last statement I refer them to an excerpt from a letter written from one of those Missouri men who never believe anything unless you can show them. He says: "I have some *mongrels,* this year's hatch, from stock claimed to score 96, and some have neither marking nor type. They are white and fawn, but color not distributed as it should be, and carriage little more erect than my Rouens. Have a neighbor who has had no better luck. The eggs were green."

The only man I happen to know of who has bred the Indian Runners continuously for more than a dozen years, Mr. Fay Davis, Michigan, said in 1910: "It is a sorry fact to me to see the Standard makers try to spoil one of the utility points of the breed. I discarded, years ago, all my green egg type; now to go backward is a bitter pill to take."

Publicly, Mr. Davis has said, after long experience: "I believe that every duck that lays a large, pure white egg shows, at certain seasons of the year, a certain amount of penciling, which is very marked when the feathers are new, and becomes fainter when the feathers grow older. In my estimation, this penciling adds to the beauty of the plumage."

Mr. Davis also states that he has spent twelve years in selection of ducks that lay pure white eggs, and having right cheek markings and correct shape, and refers to "the cinnamon-colored (the new 'fawn!') ducks that lay the dark eggs and that are incorrect in shape." In 1910, I think, on buying a pair of cinnamon-colored, light fawn, Standard ducks, he got the small, dark eggs again. Surely, this man's testimony ought to count very strongly. I have been able to get the names of only two other breeders who were handling Indian Runners in America at the time when he took them up. The testimony of a man who has held to them *all through their trial in this country,* is the best testimony that we can get. Mr. Davis adds that he has no trouble in selling all that himself and his customers can raise of the English, white-egg stock, and that he knows of no other fowl that can compare with them in profit. The knowledge of the man who has known both types since their beginnings with us, is the knowledge which ought to save us from making future mistakes.

Since the first edition of this book was put out, there has been a decided change of attitude toward the English type on the part of the breeders and judges in general. Miller Purvis, T. F. McGrew, one or two A. P. A. judges, and others as notable, have publicly favored the recognition of the English-bred duck as a separate variety, and it may be only a question of a few months before these penciled ducks will be freely admitted to the shows on their merits and judged by the English Standard. It remains, then, for it to be generously admitted that the English type was the progenitor of the other, and therefore deserves first place.

Many of the breeders of the rank and file, however, have tried hard to make it appear that the earnest effort of the fanciers of the English-bred type to protect themselves from business extinction was intended as an effort to drive American Standard birds out of existence, and their breeders "off the earth." No greater misconception could possibly be entertained. The

whole prestige of the fancy was brought to bear against the penciled ducks, until no visitor at a show would cast a glance at them. It was only the belief of their breeders that they were decidedly superior to the American Standard type in actual intrinsic value that kept the breeders of the English type from throwing up the game. A few dollars and a year's work might easily place any one of them on the popular side, at half the cost in wear and tear of holding to the English type. Yet they did hold to it, tenaciously.

The matter of color is still a bone of contention. The English duck was described as "fawn" in color before there were any American Standard birds of the present color in existence.

The matter of the name belonging especially to the first in the field, namely, the English type of Runner, is so plainly one of common-sense and fair dealing that I think no one can candidly consider it without admitting the justice of the claims of the English type. But this does not seem to me now to be of very great importance. The mix-up on the word "fawn" is so hopeless that I think the only hope of straightening it may be to throw aside the adjective "Indian" entirely, and call one variety the American Runner, the other the "Penciled Runner," while the third sort comes in simply as the White Runner. From my correspondence with those who would really like to see the matter settled with justice to both, I think this way out would suit the majority. There is room enough for both varieties, surely. An occasional breeder here now keeps all three varieties.

The Standard of the 1910 Revision has been so thoroughly discredited at many points that it must be very difficult, I think, for the next few years, to work up much loyalty to it. In the Indian Runner ranks, no one seems to be satisfied.

The way the color question was working out before the last revision was shown very clearly in an exhibit at the Syracuse,

N. Y. Fair, the year of the last revision. The Standard then called for *"light* fawn". Criticisms without number were made on the rating of a certain bird, practically white, which, because of superior type, was given the blue. During the same Fair, in 1911, I stood before the Runner coops, and saw a beautiful bird, as far as type went, with no prize. The bird was almost white. I asked a man who was demonstrating Runners, (evidently the leader in the winnings) why this bird was neglected, when at another time a bird of the same sort received first under the same judge. My supposed ignorance was not much enlightened, for the smiling reply was: "Oh! that was *a mistake."* Later, I was told that it was this same bird that won the blue the previous year.

As the initiated know, it was the loss of the word "light" from the Standard description that made the difference. Yet the columns of the poultry periodicals are still dotted with advertisements describing the birds of rabid fighters for the American Standard bird, which advertisements claim the owners to have the acme of the American Standard type; yet, they are described as "light fawn throughout." And the Standard calls for "light fawn" *in tail of duck only!* One breeder has declared in print that the American Indian Runner Standard is *a joke,* and that the bird it demands has never been bred and cannot be bred.

In the matter of color of the birds and color of the eggs, it seems to me that some have subverted honest straightforwardness to supposed business demands. I urged, last year, that those who were breeding to the English Standard say so clearly, so that none should be led into buying that which they might not want. Many of those raising the penciled duck have done this, I am glad to see.

But Y—, a recent writer, a breeder of the American Standard type, supposed to be giving valuable information to the public, says: "There are two varieties of Indian Runner Ducks. One is the English Standard, a penciled variety, commonly known

as the brown and white; the other is the light (!) fawn and white, our own American Standard bird. The penciled ducks cannot compete with the American Standard fawn and white because they are disqualified on account of the penciling. The country is flooded with these inferior ducks, now being advertised as the 'true fawn and white.'" This writer further speaks of them as "a non-standard bird, many of which lay green or blue eggs, for which there is no demand."

This is amazing, coming from a breeder who has always had the green-egg birds till this year, who has suddenly acquired the only strain of white-egg Runners in the country (!) and who has attained them by changing males in every yard every year (so says advertising). A breeder, too, whose birds are *all* of the new Standard *light* fawn and white stock and layers of snow-white eggs.

The new Standard does *not* call for *light* fawn and white, and it does *not* disqualify the penciled birds. In brief, no writing of equal length has contained so many actual mis-statements apparently for business's sake. The English birds are *not* commonly known as "brown and white," and those which I know *do not* lay green eggs. "There is no difference between the two varieties except in color, so far as their laying qualities are concerned," is a previous inconsistent statement of the above writer.

The American Standard disqualifications refer to the dark breast known as "claret" and to the blue bars on wing, which are generally taken as showing foreign blood; beyond this, absence of feathers in the wings or twists in wings, back or tail, complete the list of special disqualifications, and I find nothing in the general disqualifications which applies to Indian Runners.

The American Standard everywhere stands firmly for shape as making the breed. For instance, under Plymouth Rocks, it says: "The six varieties are identical, except in color." When it comes to the Indian Runner, the Standard allows 25 points out of one hundred for color, and 41 for shape. Yet, with

only 25 points on color, and 61 for shape and carriage, how is it that the light-fawn-and-white contingent, *who testify that they haven't even the color called for by the American Standard,* are spending their whole strength and falsifying facts to make out that the English-bred duck is so "inferior?" This, too, when their self-elected spokesman says they "differ only in color."

If the American public does find itself misled by the words "true fawn and white," it will be because it has been purposely tangled up by such writers as the above. There *must* be more than one shade of fawn: because the American Standard calls for *darker fawn* in head of drake than in other parts. Fawn color is a light, yellowish brown; so says Webster. And if the Standard has no specific definition, it must accept the usual meaning of a word. Therefore, the English duck *known as a "fawn" duck long before the American Standard style was in existence,* has double claim to use the word "fawn," if its breeders so desire.

But, despite this, I would personally prefer to have the word "penciled" come into general use, simply because no one can then make a mistake.

A little worse, a little more unfair than the above is a statement from another breeder of American Standard Runners which appeared in print late in 1911. A confiding old gentleman, an editor, recently become interested in Runners, asked about the green eggs. The breeder replied: "There may be a man who has one or two that will lay white eggs, but they will not do that all the season." This man has known Runners many years, and he could not possibly have failed to know that he was giving an impression fully equivalent to a lie, and deceiving his old friend with others! And no one need take my word for it, because this same breeder, in another publication, at another time said, speaking of the two types: "They *all* lay a tinted egg *once in a while.* Contrast this with his "There may be a man who has one or two that lay white eggs," and you see the quality of the man.

Never mind about the Runner! *She can prove her own value.* But the deceived old gentleman says, in his paper: "I think friend X (we will call him) has given us pretty near the truth in the matter." N. B.—The old gentleman has friend X's strain of birds, which lay "green or bluish-green" eggs, he says. And ALL of Y's are advertised to lay snow-white eggs! Both, kindly remember, have the "true" American Standard kind, and *nothing else!*

As a corollary and sufficient comment on the fairness of the whole matter, I may refer to a letter received about a month before this writing, from a county secretary. The letter states that the judge and other members of the A. P. A. at the show in this county, made it their especial business to tell every one they could reach that the Penciled Runners were worthless, that no one was breeding them, and that they could not be sold if raised. As every breeder of the penciled type whom I happen to know well has had far more orders both for eggs and for stock, than could be filled, these things look very much like false utterances induced by prejudice or else lack of knowledge; possibly by both.

Those breeders of the American type who, apparently, were not willing to give the English ducks any chance, have persistently denied the purity of the penciled type, although the great British show, the Crystal Palace, was giving them the leading prizes year after year, and the most prominent English breeders asserted their superiority as a distinctive and pure type. They have denied its right to the original color, and have charged it with being a green-egg type. One man states that he does not know whether the tinted-egg layers are better than the others or not, because he has ducks that lay tinted eggs early in the season and mostly white eggs later on. This man has bred ducks many years, and any one who has bred them but a season or two knows that ducks, at the beginning of the lay, often give eggs covered with a coating which does not belong to the shell,

and which washes off! I have, indeed, known a duck which had laid strictly white eggs for an entire season, to lay blue eggs five or six days in succession, once during the next season. But this does not stamp her as anything but a white-egg duck, for there was evidently something temporarily wrong, either with her digestive or her laying functions, and she was, normally, strictly a white-egg bird. A simple coating which can be removed is quite different from a shell filled with green coloring matter.

The Indian Runners Making History in 1910

CHAPTER V

Nearly every mail throughout the year brings inquiries as to the various types of Indian Runner, or recitals of experience with the breed in one type or the other. As to the birds themselves, I have little difficulty in replying to questions. As to origin, history, etc., the people who have the facts have varied in their willingness to let the public have them—at least through this medium; and it has had them through no other medium thus far. The public wants these facts and it wants them badly.

Several of the earlier breeders gave me all the help I asked. For this they have my hearty thanks, and I know that they will have that of the public which is interested in Indian Runners, as well. Others ignored my request, or answered far afield. To one breeder, I wrote thus: "Davis, of Michigan, tells me that you were one of the original breeders of Indian Runners. I want to find out just when they came into the United States and who imported them. Do you know who was the first, and whether or not the birds came from England? Also, how long ago? I see McGrew says little is known about them. I know

what English breeders say, but it seems to me that it ought to be possible to find out where United States breeders got them, and when the first were imported. It has been given out here that they came from the West Indies, which I do not at all believe, unless the two types which we are breeding at present in this country had a different origin entirely. Reply would very greatly assist," etc. All but one of these questions was ignored in the answer.

I had two ideas in mind in speaking of origin. The West Indian story, which I have refuted elsewhere, had gone all over the United States, and, having been credited to a reputable writer, who was a breeder of the Indian Runners before most of us had heard of them, it was quite generally accepted as fact; especially by those who did not know much about the duck in England, and what the best English breeders had to say about it. Moreover, England and the West Indies have had many dealings, throughout many years, and it was not an incredible story, in the light of possibilities, that our Indian Runners should have come to us, in part, at least, through the West Indies.

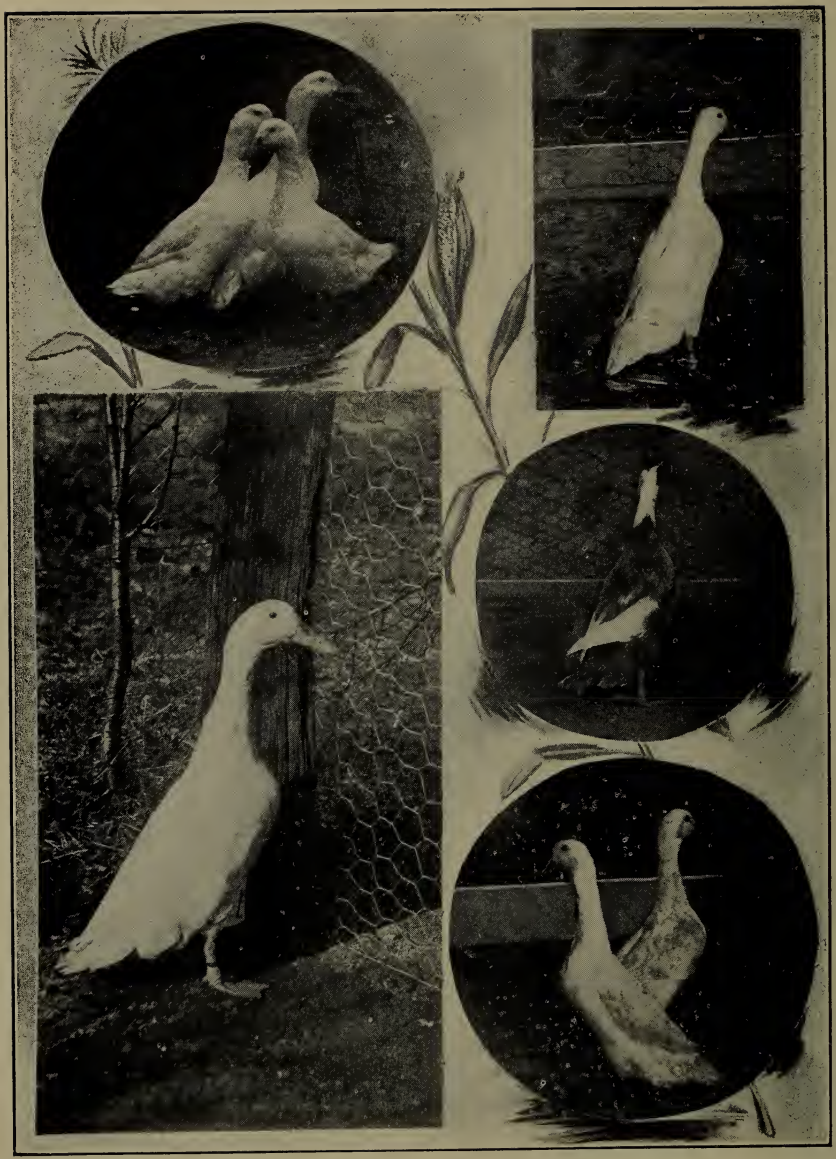
Aside from this, there was the possibility of different origins of different strains. Last winter, at the New York show, a man prominent in affecting the fate of Indian Runners in this country by his public acts, said, in my hearing, that it would be very easy indeed to reproduce the Indian Runners by the use of two or three of our earlier breeds,—at least as far as the solid fawn marking, on white was concerned. All breeders of fancy fowls know, after they have a little experience with breeding and exhibiting, that no man dare say what blood is in any one strain of birds of any breed, when it has been long out of the originator's hands. That "foreign" blood has been put into the Indian Runner of some strains, no breeder of experience and observation can fail to see. Indeed, it is usually admitted, in a general way, although no one confesses to having introduced such blood. When a bird which, in its purity, should stand very erect, de-

generates into a logy, heavy bird which it is very difficult to breed out of the horizontal carriage, there is a reason—with apologies to the owners (?) of this clause! And every experienced breeder knows in a general way what that reason is. When a bird that is, in its purity, rather definitely and strongly marked with a dark color, throws a large number of white specimens, as many complainants affirm that the "fawn" Indian Runners do, there is white blood back of it somewhere. White will not prevail *so widely* in the face of man's continual selection of the other sort, unless man has made the mistake of adding more white, and so has strengthened it.

The fancier would not be unduly dependent on the Standard, if he could depend on it not to change just as he got somewhere near its demands. And, when the Association makes a mistake it is almost in honor bound to stand by it, or to recede from the point gradually, for the sake of those who have done its bidding, and bred to the false ideal. Nor can it afford, from one point of view, to admit that it has made a mistake, although many of its members will admit this personally. But the farmer must take what the fancier hands down to him, if he wants anything new in the way of a breed, and while the Association helps him on one hand, it injures him on the other.

On the day before I write this chapter, a letter came in the morning mail, from one of a firm of farmers who evidently want to grow up into fanciers, but can by no means afford to ignore the utility side of breeding. The letter said: "I have some good Indian Runners, and want to keep only the best. However, my best ducks I cannot take to the Fairs, as they are too dark. Yet, they produce the eggs we prefer,—the white ones."

On the day previous to the receipt of the above mentioned letter, I received another, inquiring about the white-egg sort, and saying: "I have some of the green-egg kind, but am not satisfied with the color of the eggs." A large breeder wrote me, the same week: "An inquirer, an M. D., writes to know if I



Trio — Motion Carriage''

''Queenmate''

''Queen's Delight''

''Penguina''
(penciled)

''Queen's Beauty''
(in foreground)

will sell ducks guaranteed to lay white eggs or money refunded; that he would not have layers of green eggs at any price, nor as a gift; that he would hardly eat them if well-cooked." Of course, this is largely a matter of personal whim, as far as not eating a green-shelled egg is concerned. But we need to remember that the great bulk of the Indian Runner eggs must shortly be sold to the public at large, few of whom lack personal whims, of one sort or another. It is our business to humor those whims just as far as we may. And we know that the people of much of our country have been taught to demand white eggs; whether it be a whim, or not, does not affect the fact with regard to the call for white eggs.

A Texas rancher who thought to take Fortune by the top-knot, as it were, and haul her into his service, wrote as follows: "The penciled ducks are better than I thought. I thought I would order several pens from different parties and stock up on the best. My only wish is that I had bought all penciled Runners." The ducks had converted the rancher to the penciled type, before they had time to lay an egg for him. The solid fawn is so handsome, in the best specimens, that I should hardly expect such sudden conversion, but I have the buyer's own testimony, in writing, as to the fact.

One or two letters which I have in hand are so bitter in expressing an opinion about the matter of change of type that I do not think it wise to publish them, even without signatures. One breeder, in especial, stated with hot comment, that he would hold to the genuine type, even if they should be disqualified by the American Committee, in the revision of the Standard.

One letter, from an inquirer not at all familiar with the Indian Runner, asks many questions. Among others, "Are they hardy?" The descriptive adjective "hardy" usually appears in any recital of the virtues of these ducks, but no one has enlarged upon it, to my knowledge. When people ask such a question as this, I immediately wonder what they mean by "hardy." Able

to withstand snow? Cutting winds? Dampness? Extreme cold? What is "extreme"? We have the light winters of the south, and the 40-degrees-below-zero of the northwest. Which of these is the fair test? Or is it a point in between? I can testify to the limit of six below zero. I have seen Indian Runners, just maturing, running in the open, in December's bitter days, with not a bit of shelter but some small coops, which they ignored. The yards were strongly wind-swept, and the birds were out all night as well as all day. They sat on their feet, and hid their heads in their ruffs, when it was coldest, and especially during cutting winds. No one with any experience with fowls would expect eggs under such conditions, of course. But the ducks were doing well enough otherwise, and happy as larks, even on the snow, as soon as it began to thaw. I judge them to be hardier in some respects than any breed of hens I have had experience with—and that is a great many. "They do not require any shelter after they are grown," is the testimony of another breeder. Nevertheless, all who expect to get eggs at the north in the colder months must provide shelter, and see that the birds do not stay much in cutting wind. Too close shelter is not desirable, especially for breeding stock.

All poultry yards, whether for hens or other birds, should have shelter on the sides toward the prevailing winds; this is only common-sense. Hedging, shrubbery, low-branching trees—any of these may afford the shelter needed. I think there is no doubt that the Runners would prefer a shelter consisting only of a roof, with thickly-branched shrubs for one or two sides; for they are very suspicious, and are much wilder when enclosed than when free to go about. Whether this would be warm enough to permit laying, I am not sure; think it doubtful, at least in the three worst months. The breeders who report that their birds lay "remarkably well" during the winter probably do not house them on the hither side of an iceberg; though even that would be more comfortable, it may be, than an open sweep

of cutting winds. Think a minute! Even inside your dwellings, unless very warmly built, a keen gale will make forty degrees difference next to the windward sides. How much more bitter will it be outside!

I see that one enthusiast says that hotels and restaurants will not use any other sort of eggs if they can get Indian Runner duck eggs. There is good sense behind the statement—regarding it rather as a prophecy—because these are the places that must often consider quantity; and in any table portion where eggs enter in as quantity, and not as eggs in natural form, two duck eggs will always take the place of three hens' eggs, so that these caterers need but pay for eight, instead of a dozen, to do the same work.

As to the horde of bakers who are said to have been using rotten eggs lately, the Indian Runner breeder looks for no custom from them. He will prefer to stick to the hotels and restaurants which "will not use any other kind" but big, sweet Indian Runner eggs.

Messrs. M. and S., Indian Runner breeders of the middle-west, both of whom have kept *both* types of Indian Runner, testify to their experiences on the same page of a 1910 number of one of our poultry papers. Mr. S. states that he can find no difference in the laying quality of the two types, but refers to the tendency of the laced birds toward a dark head and rump, as a defect. But, this is exactly what the Standard they are bred to (the English) demands them to have!

Mr. M., on the contrary, says that the laced birds are superior to the solid fawn sort in hardiness, and in the "production of more and larger white-shelled eggs." He also says that when the Indian Runner comes to be bred for market eggs mainly, "you must have a supply of large, white eggs to please the trade and obtain the highest price." Ten times its weight within the year, is what he avers that a laced duck of this breed, properly handled, will produce. He bases his preference fundamentally

on the fact that the laced birds are the stronger birds and the better layers.

Mr. S. again, finds the solid colored birds easier to breed to Standard requirements, and thinks this is a virtue; while Mr. M. reiterates that it is the largest amount of white-shelled eggs that the people want, and thus stands for the English-bred penciled birds. These, he breeds largely, and sells at good prices.

If I have not, on the other pages of this book, made it sufficiently clear that I have no wish to coerce the fancier who likes the fawn and white birds into raising anything else, I want to do so now. But, I have seen his birds where he shows his best. I know them to have been inferior to the original type in several respects, because he has too far ignored true type, in a craze for a certain color. In doing this, as all know, he breaks, like many other breeders, a fundamental rule of the law-giving Association. But what of that? Is he not a fancier, and may he not do *as he fancies?*

Neither, for any cause, would I put a handsome bird out of existence; but I certainly would oppose her shoving aside the real claimant to honors; especially when it means that many a farmer, caught by the name and the fame of the "Indian Runner" will be deluded into buying the green-egg "solid fawn" type, only to "tear his hair" when these birds begin to lay.

I first took this breed up to test it for the benefit of the thousands of readers of a prominent farm paper. I found it better than I expected, and I found many more people interested than I had looked to see. It is because of these people, and many others like them, who will in the future want to know as much as possible about the Indian Runners, that I have ventured to differ from that great and wise body, the American Poultry Association, and many of the good fanciers who compose it and to make that difference public, so that well-informed buyers may know what they are doing.

The Indian Runners Making History in 1911

CHAPTER VI

Early in 1911, a breeder of the Penciled ducks wrote: Blank is advertising "eggs from *the only* white-egg strain of the fawn and white (American Standard) Runners in existence. You see, he saw 'the handwriting on the wall' and is quick to make a change."

The next month, the following came to me from a man with common-sense and business ability, but who said: "I am a new hand with Indian Runners. I raised a few ducks last season, and bought a few of the same strain. About six weeks ago, an expert on poultry, a member of the Am. P. Ass'n., called to see my ducks. He wanted 100 eggs, but not with my dark-headed drakes. Well, I knew nothing about ducks, and I almost broke the hame-strap finding two drakes of the 'light fawn and white' for one pen. They have *blue head and tail markings!* Had I read your book before this 'expert' was here, I certainly would have given him the laugh! I will warm him up when I see him! I consider your book better than good. I am getting 20 to 23 eggs a day from 24 ducks. All are white eggs

save one. I have spoken for eggs from Eastern breeders of the 'light fawn and white,' said to be pure white-egg strain. If they hatch and I should raise some green-egg layers, I will raise a howl! I tried hard to find stock of the 'light fawn and white' (I aim to keep both strains so I can please all, but the eggs must be white), but as yet no one guarantees straight white eggs, and I would not pay express charges on a duck that would lay green eggs. I think we Americans go to seed on color, especially that word 'fawn.' There isn't one person in a hundred that knows just what fawn is. I call it 'buckskin"; and the penciled ducks 'buckskin brindle.' "

On this same matter of color, Mr. Walton writes me, the week this chapter is being written: "Seems to me the judges must be far from even the American Standard, if, as some correspondents say, a penciled bird of superior type is put down behind a plain feathered one, however poor in shape and carriage the latter may be. How does this come, when your Standard gives two-thirds its points to carriage and type? One thing to be guarded against is the danger of faddist judges and breeders going for penciling, marks, OR ANY OTHER TRIVIAL POINT, and riding it to death."

Touching the matter of white eggs, one breeder was quite indignant because I wrote him asking in especial if his birds all laid white eggs. "I have not got a Runner on the place that lays any color but a pure white egg," he writes. "I shipped eggs last season to every state in the Union; also Canada, Cuba, Porto Rico, Hawaiian Isles and Mexico, and every Runner egg I sold was a pure white egg. I am one of the loudest enemies of the new Standard Fawn, green-egg strain, that ever existed. Shape makes the breed, and my idea is that white eggs should be one of the requirements of a good Runner."

Another who bought foundation penciled stock direct from England says: "Have bred in line since, and consider that I have a distinct strain. They breed remarkably true. No slate-

colored specimens in this strain, and no green eggs. Every egg pure white and lots of them."

Another says: "My stock is true to name, and they have laid nothing but large pure white eggs."

I place this testimony as evidence, against the guesses—or worse—of those who say there are no strictly white-egg Runners.

One or two letters may show the difficulties prone to arise when either breeders or buyers fail to state distinctly what they sell or what they may wish to buy. One correspondent writes: "I had my troubles with the green-egg runts and it cost me dear, but I found out in time to save 20 old ducks that were the right kind, and got stock from Canada and got on my feet again. The breeder I got my stock from is winning in Canada and *mine are winning in my yards!* That ideal egg farm that many people dream about will be realized sooner through the English white-egg strain of Runner ducks than in any other kind of poultry. I have a good farm here, but an old shack of a house, and poor buildings, and got in debt the first two years; but the ducks are helping me get out of debt and keep square. When I get the buildings and shelter belts I think I can get all the rest with my ducks. The only way I will ever put new blood into my flock is to hatch the white egg myself!"

The following shows even more clearly the chain of community of interests that may lead to misinformation and loss; also, the need of exact statements. This letter was received at mid-summer, 1911: "I have a flock from an imported strain that lay a large, pure white egg. A few weeks ago, I ordered a sitting of eggs from X, who advertises in the *Southern*—— The eggs came; two-thirds of them were small, dark green eggs. I could not set them and mix them with my flock of pure-bred ducks. I wrote to Mr. X, explaining why I did not want the eggs. He wrote back that I need not expect him to take the eggs back. Then I wrote him that I would let the *Southern*——

decide whether I was mistaken about the pure Indian Runner laying a pure white egg." The breeder wrote back that the editor was his personal friend and the customer might write as much as he pleased. The editor wrote the customer that duck eggs were "apt to be most any color." The buyer continued, in the letter I quote: "If the farm papers are going to uphold advertisers like this, how are the uninformed farmers to know whether they are getting purebred stock, or not? This is a matter that ought to be righted. If Mr. (the editor) is not familiar with the Indian Runner, why doesn't he inform himself?"

I wrote the inquiring customer, who believed he had a clear case, something like this: "I fear that, as your original order did not mention that you required white eggs, both law and justice are on the side of the seller, exasperating as the matter is to you. For, simply because the American Standard *requires* the solid fawn (and white) Runners, they are fairly supposed by fanciers to be THE Runners, unless the contrary is indicated in the buyer's letter. From the American Standard point of view, *its* kind of Runners are the 'true' Runners. You can now see why, in the book, I objected to the use of this word 'true' as likely to be confusing."

Nothing could give a clearer illustration from life of the point I am making, that a "gold brick" is being handed to farmers who order Indian Runners without knowing the facts, or even without specifying most clearly just what they are ordering, when they do know. They must say, if this is what they want, that they require the white-egg, penciled duck, bred to the English Standard. All three of these points are now necessary, because the fanciers in general, seeing plainly now that the white egg must come, have begun to select from their flocks the birds which lay white eggs, and are advertising to meet the demand, "White-egg strains." It takes years upon years to build up a strain certain to breed true, and no one knows what green-

Full Waltons from Imported Stock

(Artist spoiled this cut, leaving shadows on right hand birds, and thickening neck of one on left.)

A "Walton" Pair Female in Foreground

egg ancestry, near or remote, these ducks of theirs may have had. Mr. Walton states that the Walton strain of Indian Runners never laid anything but white eggs.

An old breeder of American Standard ducks affirms that "by proper selection" breeders can soon have them all laying white eggs. In time, possibly this will be the outcome. But what really happens, *now,* is this: Customers who make requisition for white eggs from such breeders, may get them, and farmers who are not informed and who do not ask for white eggs get the green eggs that are culled out. This is but human nature, and would be considered strictly fair by most breeders, for the reason that the Standard says nothing about the color of the eggs. If the customer also is silent on this point, the inference is that he does not care. Once more, then: From the American Standard point of view, the plain fawn ducks, with white markings are strictly purebred; from the English Standard point of view, they are another variety, and, the English have the prior claim by at least fifty years.

Not all imported English ducks lay white eggs. But any one who has a strain that lays large, white eggs and plenty of them, and keeps it up year after year, is all right for market eggs, no matter what they are called.

The one thing that comes most clearly out of this mix-up is that we have two distinct varieties of Runners. The *injustice lies in the newer sort trying to substitute itself for the prior claimant,* instead of coming in as an additional variety. The *Indian* Runner is a penciled bird; the American Runner is plain, because the American Standard demands it to be so.

A breeder who says that he has tried both parti-colored varieties, and would prefer the American Standard ducks if they were as good egg producers as the penciled, gives his experience in very vivid language, almost extravagant. I do not know him personally, and I have found no one who does, but he has all the prestige of the American Poultry Association

behind him, since he is a licensed judge, and no judge can be licensed without other good judges to vouch for his work and his integrity, if my memory is correct with regard to A. P. A. law. He says the ducks of the English penciled type are "the greatest layers of the age." He admits that there are a few strains of the American Standard birds that are "really great layers," but says, in general, that fanciers have given their strength to getting color till many strains are "worthless" for egg production.

Mr. T. F. McGrew, whose judgment is considered so good that his name has been mentioned widely and favorably for the Presidency of the American Poultry Association, after Mr. Hicks gets tired of it, said this, under date of October 4, 1911, in a private letter to me: "The proper solution of the problem would be to have two varieties and not to try to push out the fawn and white with the other variety. I am at a loss to understand why it is that people who are interested in Indian Runner Ducks cannot see that the laced (or penciled, as you prefer) should be classed as a separate variety of Indian Runner Ducks."

Inasmuch as this is but the attitude of working commonsense, I am indeed glad to have such a deliverance from a man standing so high as Mr. McGrew, on this question. But I trust that Mr. McGrew and all others will remember that it was the sustained and determined effort to discredit the Penciled variety utterly in this country which set its advocates upon the up-hill work of saving it to the United States farmers.

Mr. Walton says that, leaving color entirely out of the question, either as to eggs or the feathers, "the most erect, quick-running type of Indian Runner is the best foraging and laying duck in existence." The level-bodied varieties, he states, "can't touch it; but, it does not lay 240 eggs in 240 days, nor does it usually lay 320 in a year, and what is more, it doesn't tell lies, and it doesn't ask any one to tell them for it." He has tried the strains making the greatest claims, in England; and, as

Secretary of the Indian Runner Duck Club, he has unusual opportunities to know the best that is in existence, and to get it if it is any better than what he previously had. He stated positively early in 1911, "The penciled-fawn-with-white, white-egg-laying Indian Runner is the purest blood you can get at present, and there is a greater demand than supply."

The Worst About the Indian Runner

CHAPTER VII

If we are to tell the best about a breed, it is only fair defense of those who cannot exercise sound judgment as to their own chances, to tell the worst, also. Let us plunge in, therefore, and have the worst over!

"The Worst", please note, falls under two heads: that brought out by experience, and that brought forth by guesses, or on general principles, or in fear that this natty little duck is going to hurt the sales of hens, or even in order to attract attention and rush in where the experienced "angels" fear to tread.

I think every reader will see, instantly, that it is unlikely that any person in the country has scanned with a keener eye every line about the Indian Runner during the last year, than the author of this book, myself. The word "Indian Runner" looks to me to be written in raised type, so quickly does it catch my eye. Doubtless, I have not seen all; but I have all the important poultry publications and many of the lesser ones, and interested readers all over the country write, calling attention to notable articles or items.

In my own correspondence, one person wrote as follows, speaking of "enthusiastic" correspondents: "I know the breed. Ours is a land of liars. No sooner does a man tell a good story than his neighbor considers it a duty to go him one (I should rather say three) better. Just now, Runners are on the run, and Leghorns are getting a rest. My 21 produced eleven eggs yesterday (a banner day); to-day, three. Be amiable in spite of this. You see, I love them in spite of all." This was written in March. Also in March, he said: "I think the Indian Runner an over-estimated bird. From 23 ducks, I am getting only eight eggs a day." Later, this correspondent was himself enthusiastic about the Runners.

Recently, a Runner breeder wrote to this effect: "Did you see how Rigg is hammering Indian Runners? What's he butting in for?" Mr. Rigg is a dignified, experienced journalist and poultry writer, whose honesty of intent no one questions. If he has raised Runners, I don't think the public knows it. But this is what he said, when asked to explain what he meant by his "warning in regard to the Indian Runner Duck boom":

"The Indian Runner Duck boom has taken on large proportions, and many people have been led to believe that this duck is more profitable to the egg farm than any breed or variety of fowls. We wanted to warn our friends that the merits of this duck as an egg-producer have been over-stated. It is a very prolific egg-producer, to be sure. But there is not the market for duck eggs that there is for eggs of fowls." He goes on to say that duck raising requires a special location, while "most any piece of good land" is suitable for fowls, and that the good duck location "is an exceptional one." Mr. Riggs then repeats: "Again we advise our friends to be careful how they go into this new breed."

As to "over-statement," I wonder if Mr. Riggs knows of a single breed of hens whose merits as egg-producers have not been over-stated! Probably no such breed or variety exists.

As to "most any good land" being suitable for fowls, Mr. Rigg most certainly does not score there, for the very specialness about the duck location is that *it doesn't need good land;* the waste places being especially suited to it. I saw, in a dinky little stream in New York state,—a stream with a dozen turns and twists, possibly,—to every two or three rods, and widely-bordered by swale, a flock of fifty most beautiful Runners: the thriftiest, happiest lot of birds one could ask to see. As to productiveness, these were not yet of laying age; but their immediate ancestors, a small lot, had laid 100 per cent for the flock, 83 times—that is on 83 different days—in less than eight months. If my friend, Mr. Rigg thinks this is exaggeration, I can give him dates and figures from the daily memorandum. These were strictly half-Walton birds.

A letter from another doubter—out on the west coast—reads as follows: "I think Mr. Robinson has hit off the Indian Runner boom about right in the June F. P. I admire him for his sane and logical treatment of poultry questions. About the Runners, perhaps they will be mortgage-lifters, as long as their eggs can be sold for hatching, but, as market eggs, I can't see it. What I'd like to find out is the truth of that assertion about Indian Runner eggs bringing as high as 20 per cent premium over hen eggs for market. They don't do it here. Even Mrs. Mellette, with all her booming of their superiority over hen eggs, had to acknowledge that the peddler who buys up eggs in town wouldn't take her duck eggs. I asked my grocer, who keeps rather a fancy line of goods and pays me above quotations for 'extras', for my White Leghorn eggs, about the sale of duck eggs. He said they never took the duck eggs; there were few who would buy duck eggs. So, there you are."

So far as the 20 per cent premium on duck eggs is concerned, I may say that I have personally seen commission receipts where not only 20 per cent, but 50 per cent above the price for

hen eggs was received. But this is not a customary difference. The peculiarity of the market for duck eggs is explained in the chapter devoted especially to this part of the question.

The reference of the above correspondent to Mr. Robinson, brings us logically to speak of his opposition. I think he is the only one of the poultry editors who has put himself in continuous and persistent opposition to the Indian Runner. He is recognized as a man of honesty; also as a man of stubborn prejudice. But, inasmuch as his own statement in a somewhat recent article of some length shows that his opposition is directed to "the *Sham* Indian Runner," we need give him no further notice. It is the Genuine Indian Runner with which this book aims to deal.

Just one more instance from the ranks of "the Opposition" may serve to fortify readers against the enthusiasm of the breeders quoted, or a blind reliance on the words of the present writer. This is noted from the only unfavorable review on the first edition of this book which has come to my notice, (the editors being otherwise uniformly kind in their reviews, and recognizing the value of having a book on the Indian Runner giving facts straight from the yards of many breeders.) The one opposing editor says: "This is another partisan book, professedly written to boom the Indian Runner Duck. It is unfortunate that all the information one can obtain about these ducks is furnished by partisan breeders of them, and probably needs to be taken with the proverbial grain of salt! That they are great layers is undoubtedly true [*Hope Mr. Rigg saw that!*], but that one of them laid 320 eggs in one year may well be doubted until we can have some reasonable proof of it other than just a mere say-so. The Indian Runner is a very small duck. What little meat there is on them is of excellent quality. Poultry keepers who cater to the duck-egg trade will probably do well to take up Indian Runners for egg production, but growers of duck meat will doubtless continue to breed the Pekin." In my

view, the above contains the following points which might render it, too, wisely taken "with the proverbial grain of salt": item, one error of judgment; item, one mis-statement; item, one prophecy already discredited by the facts; item, one declaration showing that the book had not been carefully read.

It seems to me that it is an error of judgment to seek to give the impression that outsiders, be they editors, or what not, can know better about any breed than its breeders. It is a mis-statement to say that this book was written "professedly" to boom the Indian Runner. The prophecy that duck meat growers would hold to the Pekin is proved false in one large plant during 1911, as shown in another chapter. The assumption that this book carried the idea that 320 eggs a year was easily possible could not have been made, had the reviewer read the pages given to discussing this and several other abnormally high records.

The way people read things seems to make a tremendous difference in the facts, as far as they are themselves concerned. Those who had the first edition will know that I referred to all the large records as unproven. I also stated that we had had Indian Runner Ducks, raised wholly in confinement, begin to lay "while still just less than four-and-one-half months old," adding, "It is not common to them to lay quite so early as this." A beginner who had raised nine from ten hatched said: "But I cannot agree with you as to your statement of early laying. Mine were hatched Aug. 13 and 14; have not laid yet. There is quite a difference between this *and four and one-half months, the claim you make (!)*" As I had taken special pains to say that the late hatched Runners were rather apt not to lay until seven months old, I felt that this reader had (not intentionally, of course) mis-represented me.

The keen reader will have noted that the above, which covers the really damning things which have been said in the few months just past about the Indian Runner, are all from "the

audience." *Not one, so far as is known, has bred the Runners.*

One or two adverse opinions from people who have bred them—all that I have seen—are, it will be noticed, far less virulent in their criticism. One correspondent of "Gleanings", the well-known bee magazine, writes: For a person who has unlimited green feed and range, perhaps they are all right; but where all feed has to be bought and no clover or alfalfa available, I do not think them a great money-maker. I have had them nearly a year, and cannot recommend them to any town person, or one who has not the above necessities to enable him to make a good portion of their feed inexpensive."

Referring to the prejudice against duck eggs, the same writer says: "No matter how groundless it is, it is there, and the public will have to be educated up to the value of the white egg of the Indian Runner before there is an unlimited market for them. Personally, I think them as good as hens' eggs; but the average person, in this part of the world, anyway, does not think so, and I have met this prejudice when disposing of those I had for sale."

One other says: "I do not think that ducks will replace hens to any extent, on our chicken farms. It takes almost twice as much to keep a duck as it does a hen." This, let it be noted, is a general statement, tacked on to a discussion of Runners in such a way that it appears to include the Runners. As some ducks weigh four pounds, others more than twice this, and as there is even more difference among hens, the folly of such a general statement is apparent. One of the worst points about the Runners is that the mature males are often troublesome and somewhat brutal. They must not be allowed where the young are kept, as they may "scalp" them. Other breeds of fowls, however, are sometimes as bad in this respect.

The Best About the Indian Runner

CHAPTER VIII

In this chapter, as in the foregoing, I shall use only material which has come to light since the first edition was sent to the publishers. Moreover, it will not be an outsider's say-so, but direct from those in the work. I cannot, of course, vouch for the accuracy of the statements, any more than I can vouch to you my own accuracy and truthfulness. You must judge from your knowledge of human nature and the probabilities. Most of these letters have come to me in the regular line of acquaintanceship or of business; some of them because I was the author of the book. I know no reason to doubt any one of them, other than that it is human to question that which exceeds the normal, or that which we have believed normal. But there is so much of this "Best" testimony, and it is so strong, that I can only defend you from getting over-enthusiastic by urging that you read "the best" and "the worst" always at the same sitting!

We might begin with the personal testimony of the editor of "Gleanings" before referred to. I do not think there is a man in the United States whose unsupported word would be

taken quicker and by more people than "Brother Root's". In one issue, Mr. Root says: "To-day is April 6, and my one Indian Runner duck I have several times mentioned is still laying her egg a day, and she has done this now for almost if not quite 100 days without a break. I have read stories like this, but I fear I shall have to confess I never expected to own a fowl of any sort that could give a big, white egg (or perhaps I should say, rather, a bluish-green egg) for over three months, without a skip." In the next issue, appearing two weeks later, Mr. Root refers to "that Indian Runner duck that laid *over* 100 eggs without a miss." The following issue contained a story of another Indian Runner Duck, the report, supported by a signed affidavit, stating that one of its writer's Indian Runners had laid 98 eggs in 96 days. "Eggs are large and white," the report continued.

The editors may as well continue their innings: Miller Purvis, editor of "Poultry"—a leader among poultry papers—said early in 1911, concerning some new Penciled Runners: "We received the three ducks and the drake March 3. One duck laid Mar. 12, and the next day two of them laid. Then all three of them began to lay regularly, and up to this time, (25 days after we picked up the first egg) we have got 72 eggs, lacking three of getting one a day for each duck for 25 days. Every one of these eggs has been pure white. Tested by cooking, we have been unable to detect any difference between them and eggs from our hens." He goes on to say: "If they continue as they have started out, we are inclined to think our egg ranch will be largely stocked with Indian Runners in the end." To which Mr. Root adds: "If his experience and mine are not the exception, no wonder he is coming to the same conclusion as myself—that all his chicken business hereafter will be considerably along the line of ducks." Editor Purvis is located out in far Idaho, as we of the east regard it.

Turning now to my private correspondence, the first letter I pick up says: "All lay white eggs; 49 ducks laid from Feb. 15 to July 15, 150 days, 5316 eggs; up to Aug. 15, 180 days, 6000. Note that this is for a business flock, and that the average is 20 eggs a month for each duck, all through, or 120 each in six months." This is not high, but it is one-half higher than the *average* record for hens *in a full year,* with six full months yet to hear from. This report is from California.

The next report is virtually the same, viz., 20 eggs a month from the Middle of Feb. to the middle of July. It continues: "They are now laying right along (over 50 per cent) and show signs of moulting. Seven-eighths of the feed I have given them has been cracked corn. They have had no wet mash. Since the ice broke up they have had the run of the mill pond across the road. They have also laid eggs around the farm which I have not counted, though I often come across one or more. They have not offered to sit. Their pen is an old cow shed on north side of barn. About 25 rats also occupy this pen. (I caught eight once last week.) They may get some of the eggs before I get up in the morning."

A letter which came from the far south says: "I now have seven ducklings which will be seven weeks old to-morrow. I also have a lot of Barred Rock chicks which are just three days younger. This morning, I concluded to weigh some of each, and compare them. All my ducks weighed more than two pounds each, two of them tipping the scales at two and one-half pounds each. My largest chick weighed about three-quarters of a pound. When I first set my eggs poultrymen advised against it, on the ground that they would eat me out of house and home. They do eat more than a chicken, but they can be raised on bran and chopped alfalfa or oats, with a little meat thrown in, and this is the cheapest kind of feed. Even if they ate twice as much as a chicken, they would still be just as profitable, for they will grow more than twice as fast as a chicken during the first ten weeks."

It will be noticed that those who say the ducks eat more are speaking of the growing ducks. The last clause, "they will grow more than twice as fast as a chicken during the first ten weeks," explains this. Fowls *must* eat for growth; *rapid growth must mean good appetites.*

The letter continues: "You don't have to talk to convert a poultryman to the Indian Runner, if he can see them occasionally and watch them grow."

The next correspondent has also a word to say about feed and feeding. He advertised that his ducks laid all winter, and I wrote to ask about it. He replied: "Will say that my ducks *do* lay all winter, but of course I feed them good, as nothing will lay without feed. I feed a soft feed of bran and corn meal and clover and oyster shells. Yes, they lay a much larger egg than chickens and the eggs sell for more a dozen. One flock of 60 have a record of 212 in ten months."

On the question of feed, another says, incidentally, "my millman made a mess of feed order, and my ducks, that were laying some twenty eggs the fifteenth of Jan. (a 36 per cent yield) went down to zero, and I have just hunted out the cause and found it and started them again."

To-day's mail, (Nov. 12, 1911) brought in an Institute Worker's report from a flock which I visited during the summer, and which was then making, I thought, a very creditable record, indeed. These were strictly "half-Waltons," and the owner was a beginner with Runners, who had bought eggs and had raised a small flock in 1910, just as any farmer would. The letter says: "The old ducks are still laying; at just nine months from beginning, they had averaged 185 eggs per bird. To date, the record is 196. I can scarcely possess my soul in patience until they lay the few required to make a 200-egg record*

"I read in the last 'Reliable,'" the letter continued, "that

*Later, this average was increased to 200 plus with 40 days yet to make out the year.

they make a better record the second year than the first; if so, they certainly are profitable from the stand-point of egg production alone. The young sprouts have begun to lay a little." This report is from the Middle States district, the ducks being kept on farm, free-range conditions. It is on this class of reports that I rely most to give us an idea of what "the Leghorn duck" will do with good handling under conditions available to every farmer, with watered land and without. These particular ducks had a stream to which to resort at will daily.

You will be glad to learn, I think, that Mother L. (the wife's elderly but high-spirited mother) takes practically all the care of these birds. They had no special extra care in the winter. No green stuff was available till May, and no meat till early April. Mash of bran and middlings, with corn and buckwheat for grain, completed this simplest of rations. But I will whisper to you that the lady in charge is a liberal feeder. I am sure her interest and care make at least a part of the reason for good returns.

And as to the record,—if you could see, as I did, the little thin book with its daily "number laid," such as you may see on any farm, you would know it was all straight. As for myself, I would sooner distrust my own record, or that of any one of the Experiment Stations!

Another farmer, in the same state, writes: "One of the April ducks laid when eight days less than five months old, and an Embden yearling goose laid 18 eggs this fall; and they were not fed 'lay, or bust,' either."

My own birds have been doing better than I should have the face to ask them. Nearly 43 per cent of the old ducks still on hand were laying the third week in October; the earliest of the young were not hatched till April 21st. They had been laying some time, and by the second week in October, about 40 per cent of the ducks from the first three broods were laying.

One correspondent wrote that he had not believed he would like Runners and so killed all his drakes the first fall. A year from the following December, he wrote me saying that the ducks had begun laying in February and "I still get some eggs." This letter came Dec. 8, from New York state.

One man stated that 115 ducks had, one morning, produced 117 eggs. This can come, of course, only through some duck giving an egg in less than 24 hours. It is very exceptional, but I have seen similar reports published in several instances. One, with affidavit, was of 98 eggs from 96 ducks. But, of course, no one expects or asks for such results. Such reports come at the height of the season, and probably under forced feeding. Mr. Scott, the man claiming the 320-egg record, states that he did not force this duck, except at the last, when he feared she would just miss a 300-egg record.

I do not think it either wise, or just, to *insist* that people believe a private record which far transcends any average experience even with birds well-cared-for. I do not know Mr. Scott, except through his circular and correspondence. I have sometimes prided myself on my knowledge of human nature, however, and Mr. Scott seems to me to be a man of honest intention. He has kindly furnished me with his feeding formula, which will be found in another chapter. I *bought* this information for the benefit of the farm contingent of Runner breeders. It does not differ so much from average practice as one might expect. Mr. Scott believes especially that birds expected to lay heavily should be well matured before beginning their work.

The New Hampshire farmer who wrote of the 117 eggs from 115 ducks also wrote that they averaged 112 eggs a day for nearly a month. But he added: "I don't dare tell this to those who have had no experience with the Indian Runners, but I know those who have will believe 'most anything of them."

The fact that the Runners are non-sitters helps out the records. An occasional "freak" will try to sit, as with Leghorns.

The bane of the poultry beginner is that he expects always the *best* results he has seen noted. If he could form a habit of expecting an average of the good and the bad, to begin with, there would often be more chance of his continuing a poultry raiser long enough to get the better results. There are too many things to learn, for every one to succeed, off-hand. "The 'Failures' in the poultry ranks are nearly always found among those who expect too much," says a recent writer.

One breeder, in his circular, says that three ducks' eggs are equal to five hens' eggs in weight and food value; also, that the Runners are practically grown at eight weeks, continuing: "Last year, we had ducks laying at fifteen weeks of age."

These claims seem to me to be rather beyond reason. Only extremely exceptional conditions could possibly make them true.

Another breeder says that 60 per cent of the ducks' feed is *water!* All who credit it will, of course, breed ducks.

The Indian Runner and the Farm

CHAPTER IX

A letter concerning Indian Runners which came to me in December, 1910, says: "I've tried several breeders in the north and south to find one who bred the white-egg duck. One, I believed, and parted with my money, only to discover that I had bought 'green' ducks. The breeder claimed she could fill my demand, as both parents and grandparents, for that matter, were hatched from white eggs."

Another farmer, who does a business large enough to run about 1200 eggs in incubators through April, and who has recently made a start with English-bred Runners, says: "I have picked out six females, all marked alike, fawn with concentric penciling, and will reserve same for our own breeding. Our females are well taken care of and with good care and attention to them I am looking for a great egg yield. I am going to write up a piece to have published later about a farmer's experience with Indian Runners, and I hope it will have weight with that class. For if the average farmer can get eggs in winter from the Runners when their hens do not lay, you can rest assured they will have some."

Because I see no future before the Indian Runner, eventually, except as a farm duck, I am especially glad to get the farm point of view. The above letter was sent on to me by a breeder in another state, that I might see how farm interest was developing. It will be noted that, although the writer carries far more than the average of poultry on a farm, as evidenced by his incubating so many eggs, he is looking for something that can do better in winter than is customary with hens. He is of the better class of farmers, we can guess, because he selects uniformly marked birds for breeding. He has enterprise, as is shown by the facts noted, and by his plan to write up his experience where it will attract other farmers. Beyond what his letter may thus show us, I know nothing about him. But I wish the country was fuller than it is of farmers with several of the characteristics which show in this letter. However, dealing continually, in my work, with queries from farmers all over the country, I can testify that there are many more of the class who have enterprise, education and good hard sense than people who do not come into touch with them are ready to believe.

There are already many types of Indian Runners in the country, entirely aside from the two very distinct and opposing ones to which so much reference has already been made. It is almost impossible for any breeder to put his hand to a breed without transforming it to some extent. This is abundantly shown even in the references to the "strains" of different breeders, and to the differing claims made by advertisers. How are these changes made? Often—very often—by "hocus-pocus." That is, by putting in a dash of ANY blood which a breeder may think will bring the birds nearer to his ideal—usually an ideal as to feathers and form, rather than as to production. Production cannot be ignored, to be sure, but it is made to take at least third place; for color comes first with the average fancier, then form, then, if he has no other hobby to work out, production, possibly.

But is is also true that no two breeders can take even the same strain, with birds very similar, and, working entirely apart, show the same type of birds at the end of five years. Each puts his own stamp upon the breed, or variety. It may be that all the change has been made by selection of eggs. It may be that it has been made only in the selection of birds to carry on his work. The fact remains that each worker is practically certain to put his own special stamp, "his mark," upon the birds which he will soon call his "strain."

A breeder who was especially anxious to preserve and continue a certain type, wrote another for birds of that type, to be descended from birds sent out from the yards of the first, some years earlier. It was made plain that only such birds were wanted. The testimony of the first breeder to the outcome is as follows: "I asked, before ordering, if they were just as had of me, and in return the breeder wrote that they were my strain, PURE (with the words underlined). When they came and I examined them, I could see that other blood had been used; the penciling was different, not so distinct, of a prettier shade of fawn, if anything; but they were hardly as good in shape and style, and I was in a panic. I thought I would return them, but finally sold most of them, telling the customers just what they were. The remaining suspects I shall put in a yard by themselves and observe them." Eventually, it came out that the breeder from whom these ducks came had had one male from a third breder running with the females of the first breeder's stock. There was no suspicion of intentional error, as far as I know, for breeder number two was considered honest; but the incident shows both how soon change of strain shows in the progeny, and how difficult it is to get just what one wants and definitely orders. Human nature seems to have a strangely transforming effect on varieties of fowls!

A breeder who had had fawn ducks of two types, from two breeders, wrote me: "I am satisfied that I hurt the laying

qualities by use of the light strain, (the second lot)." Both these acquisitions proving to be layers of green eggs, this breeder bought birds again, the third lot being from a well-known white-egg strain. Another change then made itself manifest, of which he writes: "My old ducks could not and would not fly under any circumstances like the last ones. One of the new is far ahead of any I have ever seen in upright carriage, and I would like to get all of mine of that type."

There is one pointer here that is worth noting. The white egg ducks in 1910 were of the more active type, and also of better carriage than anything furnished this breeder by two of the very best breeders of the solid fawn strains.

Being a very honest man, the writer of this letter was anxious to know about the tendency to flying BECAUSE he had told customers that a two-foot fence would confine these ducks. I chanced to have a personal word to add to the solution of this problem, because I had bred for some time the very strain he reported as being such flyers, and had never used anything but a two-foot fence to confine them, nor ever known them to fly over it. But it is perfectly easy to train these birds, or any others, to be breachy, by using fences too low or too weak when the birds are young and most active. The size of yards, too, may have an influence on this especial characteristic. Small yards, which offer no good starting point for strong flight, will often confine the bird—any birds—much better than larger yards. That is, not such high fences will be demanded. It is in the daily and yearly learning of such things as these as they come along, that any poultry raiser gets "knack" and accumulates a store of wisdom on innumerable points which it is simply impossible to pass on in entirety to any other worker. It is one point at a time usually.

Just before we went to press with the first edition of "The Indian Runner Duck Book," an authoritative letter from England was received. It told of many inquiries for cheap birds

coming from America and said: "There is no one with real good type birds willing to sell at utility prices. In fact, I have seen birds for which ten to twenty pounds (about fifty to one hundred dollars) was asked, of very bad type and carriage; in my opinion, fit only for the pot. I think it unfair to ask those who have really good birds to sell them for killing prices, almost." Concerning one of the newer American theories as to the origin of Indian Runners, the same breeder says: "It is worth framing, as it is one of the most incorrect and ridiculous articles I have seen, and the writer is entirely at sea. 'The Common Mongrel, etc.,' would have been a more appropriate title."

In this connection, I may say that there is a movement in England at this writing which promises to develop into the publication of a thorough and reliable book on the Indian Runner, giving all that is now known about its history, from the first to the present time. This is certainly a movement in the right direction, and I shall look with much interest for the purposed publication.

The Patent Office at Washington has recently been showing symptoms of interest in the Runners, through an employe. Whether they are to be patented, or not, is not yet announced. If so, many breeders will be on edge to learn *which type* will thus receive recognition!

In other directions, also, matters are moving. I think it was late in 1910, though I am not quite certain as to the date, that a breeder in the east sent a trio of English-bred Indian Runners to the Government Experiment Station of Porto Rico, for experimental purposes. It is quite time some one in authority was doing something with these ducks, on this side of the Atlantic ocean. For, if the things which Indian Runner breeders have been saying have been untrue, they would result in uncounted waste of money for the thousands of farmers who will try them. Whereas, if they can be proved true by some

of those in whom the farming contingent have confidence, it will mean hundreds of thousands of dollars for the farmer's pockets. We know positively that breeders in this country, even women on the farms, are making hundreds of dollars from their Indian Runners each year. On the date of January 26, 1911, I received a circular from one such woman, claiming that her ducks were made to average over ten dollars each in eight months. It is not likely that this was from market eggs, however. But with a yield of 180, and a price of 35c, the gross income would be more than half this amount. The crying need at present is for some Experiment Station here to make an exhaustive test of both types of Indian Runners for the benefit of the American farmer, on the market egg basis.

A farmer who believes thoroughly in Penciled Runners, sent a pen to the Missouri Station, for entry in the National Competition, under Mr. Quisenberry. Unfortunately, most of the birds were smothered *en route* and we shall thus have to wait a year for this comparative history.

Australia and New Zealand are far ahead of us in the things they do for the benefit of the farming population and the common people at large. But, as these matters depend largely on the common people's vote, it may be said that they are the ones chiefly to blame for what they do not get. The average man does not even know what his government is trying to do for him. And the Government is usually far more anxious to do something for him than he is to have things done, if we may judge by what is on the surface. Professors of Poultry Husbandry, for instance, are jubilant when they succeed, by all the arts at their command, in getting the names of many farmers. This is just because they know the Station can help the farmers, as soon as it gets into touch with them. And the best help must come through work with the farmers, man by man. In the matter of choice of type in the Indian Runner, I am in a position to know that our Agricultural authorities at Washington deliber-

ately threw aside a chance to do something for the farming people in studying the two warring types of the Indian Runner. They assumed that the fanciers were right in breeding to fawn, simply because the fawn contingent was in the majority and slavishly followed the Standard. As an interesting commentary on this, a disgusted word from one who has bred Indian Runners for years fits in as nothing else could. He was engaged in the practical job of catching birds to fill a shipment and for his own breeding pens. Color study was, of course, a main feature in O. K.-ing, or discarding specimens, and, as is always the case, many birds that looked well on their feet had to be rated as seconds on account of fawn in the flight feathers. I happened to be looking on, and heard his dictum: "Color in Indian Runners is nothing but a humbug anyway, for they change color every two months. How are you going to describe the color fairly when that is the case? It is out of the question! And who is going to say which is the right color, that of December, or of March or of June?" It struck me that this was as pungent a comment on the folly of ruining the distinctiveness of the Indian Runner (because some one happened to think fawn in solid color was more desirable than any two shades of fawn penciled together might be) as could possibly be made. The question must always be, Which of the varying shades of fawn is Standard fawn, and when shall the bird be judged on color,—in winter or in summer? If in summer, or spring, it must be far too dark in December; if in December it is to be just right, it will be nothing but dirty white in June. And this everybody knows.

I saw two breeders selecting a bird to fill an order that called for a high class specimen. The choice lay between two birds, one of which was nearly perfect in color, but was only moderately long in body and neck. The other was of beautiful shape and carriage, but had a flaw in the wing flight. "Which would you send? Which would you rather have if you were

choosing for your own yard?" said one to the other. "The slim, long bird, every time," was the reply. "What,—sure! even with the flawed wing, and remembering that it will affect the whole flock?" "Yes; even at that. I stand for type first." "But what about shipping it to a customer? Would you decide on that one to fill the order?" "No—o, I'm afraid not," was the half willing reply. "The customer will be better satisfied with the bird that is better in color."

All who have bred Runners long know this to be the case; and the reason is that, though Standard law, as generally applied, theoretically put shape above color, in actual practice, color, (when at all hard to get) virtually takes precedence of type, as the birds are judged in competition. And this is what every breeder of Standard birds has to meet. He dares not send what he believes to be the better bird, many times, because custom has over-ridden Standard Law. The very simple reason is, doubtless, that color appeals far more quickly to the average person, than does shape. Many a breeder of years standing, cannot select the birds typical in shape and style. And the public, which sees the shows and which buys stock, is more easily satisfied with the better colored bird, when it becomes a choice between color and shape, unless the shape is inexcusably bad.

I have known the American farm and the American farmer ever since I opened my eyes on one of these farms for the first time—my father's farm. On this farm, there was a pond, and ducks were always kept and prized. But there was nothing like the Indian Runner. I feel that I am in a position to know something of the farm attitude toward most things. Moreover, very many of my correspondents are general farmers. One of them in Virginia, said, last July ('11): "I am lame on ducks. Have read so much dope on Indian Runners that I thought I would try them out. Have 75 young ones. It will take me a year to know where I am at; yes, more than a year.

If they do not lay from 175 to 200 eggs, I do not want to hatch any more next spring; and if all this dope is straight, I do want to hatch a lot of them. So, please put me wise—how many eggs will they lay? I carry S. C. White Leghorns on free range and ship to N. Y. by express and get the short end of the near-by hennery quotation. Can I do any better? All poultry magazines and chicken literature have nothing to say about markets or advice as to the commercial end, the very life of the poultry industry. Have had to grope my way and am still on the grope. You start a chicken magazine devoted to the commercial end of the egg business and you will soon be able to give away libraries and 'other foolish things'!"

I think the New York market has taken a stronger liking than usual to the large egg, just of late. At least, more mention is made of it. If dealing with honest firms, there is no need for anybody nearby to take "the short end" on egg quotations, provided he furnishes strictly fresh large white eggs. This is for New York, and speaking of hen eggs. It seems to me that even if the Runner duck will not lay from 175 to 200 eggs, she may be well worth while in many parts of the country. The one record which we have which the average farmer will care to tie to, is that of Hawkesbury College, 200 *eggs three years in succession*. And I think it fair to say, in reply to the above, "Yes; *if you make your conditions the same as theirs.*"

But, here I have a farm story. The man who tells it is at least as honest as I am, and of course readers cannot expect me to say anything much stronger than this! He lives in Virginia. He says:

"I have 55 ducks and fifteen drakes all together at night, and on range in day. Have not separated those not needed as had no good place to put them, and many other things to look after. I got some 25 eggs (a day) about the 16th of Jan. My output then steadily decreased to zero, started again and went up to 19. To-day I got thirteen. Please tell me how many

you would let roost together, or would you separate into small bunches? I recall absolutely no article covering all this." Later, I had a letter saying there was trouble with the feed which made this drop in eggs. Forty-five per cent by the middle of January is not so bad, in a farm flock on range, and gives a pretty fair start toward 200 for the year.

This man had twice as many males as he should. But, on another farm in another state, I saw between 125 and 150 running together, because it was difficult to separate and give all equally good conditions. I think it safe to say that only the fact of good water privilege and range saved the young of this flock from being spoiled, and preserved any kind of a record for eggs. We must admit that farm conditions must be fairly met, without too much fussiness. But, we may as well apprehend first as last that old and young in very large lots all together cannot thrive and give the highest records. I do not like to put *any* young birds with old until at least a year old. And ducks often injure each other by crowding, because they go into panics so easily, when frightened.

The poultryman from one of the more important Agricultural Colleges wrote to a widely-circulated farm paper last spring, an article somewhat detractive of the Indian Runner, especially saying that ducks would eat so much as to cut apparent profits severely.

Mr. Robinson has said in his book of general reference: "It is often said, even by those who should know better, that it is impossible to satisfy the appetite of a duck. Such statements lead people to think it much more expensive to feed ducks than to feed other fowls. A flock of grown ducks will not eat more than an equal number of average chickens, NOR DOES IT REQUIRE MORE FOOD TO GROW A DUCK THAN IT DOES TO GROW A CHICKEN OF THE SAME WEIGHT." Mr. Robinson also says: "In most places, poultrymen growing both chickens and ducks will usually find the latter more profitable as long as their home market is not overstocked."

This was written of ducks in general, before the Indian Runner Duck had attracted any attention to speak of in this country. If true of other ducks, much more is it true of the Indian Runner. I will ask readers to note again the phrase "of the same weight." It is because ducks get size so very quickly that they eat so much while growing. And the reason so many fail to find ducks profitable is that their own bad management cheats them out of the profit the ducks made for them in ten weeks, by keeping them on to eat for weeks or months longer, after their period of most rapid growth is over! Please note this, as it is the vital point for those who would sell duck meat.

A young duck does gobble large quantities of food; but it grows in proportion, so fast that we may say, on occasion, that we "can see it grow." That is, day after to-morrow, it will look almost twice as large as it does to-day. A grower of Runners writes: "I never in all my experience with poultry saw anything grow like an Indian Runner Duckling. My ducklings are the curiosity of the neighborhood. At the age of five weeks, I haven't a duckling that weighs less than a pound and a half. I have investigated rather exhaustively, and I can well afford to take the chance on making a market, but I would not have the ghost of a show if I had green eggs."

This letter was written the middle of June. A letter of later date said that certain ducklings of this worker were seven weeks old, and a lot of Barred Rock chicks three days younger. On weighing and comparing, he found every duck weighing above two pounds, some a half pound above. The largest chick in the lot of about equal age weighed about three-quarters of a pound. His comment was: "I wish I had 700 ducklings at the present time; they would be good money, even as market fowls."

In order to be able to speak from personal knowledge, I myself weighed Runner ducklings, Columbian Wyandottes and Embden geese. At 26 days old the White Runners weighed one

pound each; the Columbians of similar age weighed four ounces, (one-fourth as much, notice!). Runners 60 days old weighed three pounds each; Columbians 41 days old, the nearest in age on hand, weighed less than a pound. The Embden weighed tipped the scales at five pounds, when just about one month old. I know of nothing else in the fowl line which grows so fast, especially considering that they are rather light eaters.

Water fowl will eat cheaper foods than will hens, so that the food question may, so to speak, be "dodged." There really isn't any food question, as between growing chicks and growing ducklings, when we consider the rapid gains made by the ducklings. If there were, it would be in favor of the ducks. The three vital companion questions, to the farm, are the feed question, the laying and the market. The Runner will settle the first two if the farmer is good for the last. His salesmanship is the one thing to be called in question, in the case of the Indian Runners.

A farmer whose experience covers five years says that he would not be without them. This is in south Jersey. He said, in 1911, that he had shipped to the commission houses, getting in no case less than three cents above the price for hen eggs. This was in August. The usual price was six to ten cents above that of hen eggs. In spring often 20c more. He stated, in the Rural New Yorker: "I have tried different-sized flocks, and I find that it pays best to have 75 to 100 layers, for you will be able even in the slack months to ship the eggs fresh. If the flock is small, some would be rather stale before you had enough. I ship in 30-dozen crates. I don't believe a duck egg will stand the abuse a hen egg often gets. This will make freshness a necessity, as it should be with all eggs. While the hen man is clearing his droppings-boards, fighting lice and mites, but especially roup and gapes, the duck man has only to fork out the soiled bedding on the floor and throw in a forkful of straw."

W. W. Henry, Virginia, says: "I can give my testimony as to its being entirely practical to handle a few ducks with hens, where all are on good range, and to feed all alike on a grain ration and get good results. I have seen Indian Runner ducks up at night to feed with hens, and gone in the morning before they were fed, yet lay splendidly from the middle of January to August; but, mind you! there was fine range and only about six ducks. My birds commenced to lay on oats alone in October of this year (1911). I have always had them with hens and now have some 46 ducks and about 200 hens and pullets. I get about 35 eggs a day, and half of their feed is grain (oats and corn). The authorities say the duck is not adapted to grain feeding, but I never feed anything else in the November laying season. After I have fed mash to young birds till they have good size, I then feed grain alone. I have done this because it was convenient and not because I thought it best, yet my birds do well in open weather.

"This ought to be a good thing for average farmers to know. I have only some seventy ducks, young and old (not counting drakes). I could not raise what I wished on account of the great demand for eggs." Mr. Henry is a general farmer, without help, and handles his ducks so that they may be as little trouble as possible, consistent with thrift and profit. He handles the penciled birds, and refused more egg orders than he filled in 1911, if I remember correctly the words of a previous letter.

In one of my 1911 letters concerning a new breeder of the Penciled Runners, another friend wrote: "The V's wrote me they have sold some ducks to go to Oregon at five dollars each. Sold eggs at five dollars per sitting from a small mating, and $30.00 per hundred. One man took $97.00 worth; another $60.00 worth."

Of this same young farmer, the beloved T. B. Terry wrote publicly: "I know him to be straight and true, a pusher, too. Speaking of the young man's selling $1000 worth of eggs during

a year, shipping under lock and key, Mr. Terry added, "And our friend cannot begin to supply the demand," referred to the incredible price received, and went on to tell of his putting in Indian Runners (the penciled kind, as I chance to know). The first season, he hatched 89 ducklings from 120 eggs, by machine, and raised all but three. "All this was the result of extreme care, of course," adds Mr. Terry. The name of the young man is C. K. Vanderbilt. I visited his place in 1911, saw his fine large flock of Penciled Runners, his commission receipts, etc. I do not think he has had any exceptional opportunity, *except what clever business forecasting and systematic work may give.* Mr. Vanderbilt sent two dozen of his eggs from the Penciled Runners to the publishers of "Poultry Success." After testing these, they reported: "In eating the Indian Runner Duck eggs one cannot find any difference in flavor from hens' eggs. The duck eggs do not have that strong flavor and taste, like the Pekin eggs do. The yolk is fine-grained and smoother; the albumen is firmer in texture than hens' eggs, and it really takes an expert to tell the difference when eating them."

Mr. Vanderbilt's success has been so instant, and he is such a thorough-going farmer and so straightforward a man that I have asked him to write out at some length his experience with the Penciled Runners on the "Peerless Poultry Farm." He does so as follows:

"In all my experience with poultry (some 18 years), I have enjoyed the work most during the past two years, as I have been raising the Indian Runner ducks. They have turned out to be the Farmers' Best Egg Machine. They can stand more real hardship than any other fowls, requiring only a good dry place to stay in at night, and in winter weather. Our Runners are the English-bred, dark fawn and white type, or as some term them, the Penciled Runners; but they lay the large pearly white eggs, and that is what suits the average farmer of today. I have given my neighbor farmers the eggs to test for eating, and

they all went wild over them. What was the result? Why they have them on their farms today producing such eggs as I showed them. One farmer's wife drove nine miles to our place, and in coming here, went past a farmer who had the "sports" that layed the green eggs. But after seeing the fine large white eggs from our Penciled Runners, she took home 100 eggs to put in an incubator.

"I find that the eggs hatch well in incubators, but if you want to get real big hatches, use Plymouth Rock hens. We keep quite a number for that purpose. When our ducks began to lay a year ago in January, we sent what accumulated, with our hens' eggs, to the New York City market, and received several cents more per dozen than for the hens' eggs. But when the breeding season commenced, we did some advertising, and could not keep up with the orders that came in for the eggs. Later in the season, we sold all the baby ducklings we could hatch till September. We sent them west as far as Illinois, and south as far as Virginia.

"My experience in raising them is that they do not require the feed and labor that hens need. The best method of brooding them is with hens; I put 10 to 15 ducklings with each hen in a common slatted box like a southern berry crate without a bottom, and put a piece of prepared roofing over the top, back and ends to keep out wind and rain. I move this every other day, putting up a board in front of them at night to keep out skunks, weasels or other animals that might molest them. In this way, I can raise 90 per cent of all I hatch. Brooders are all right, but for the average farmer, the hens are best. I have raised them both ways and know. The simplest and best feed for the ducklings is bread soaked in milk, squeezed quite dry and crumbled on a clean board by the coops, for the first week; then I feed four parts by measure of bran, one part of corn meal, one part of middlings, with a little sand mixed in. Feed this mixture moistened for about a week, then add 5 per cent of

beef scraps, and continue this for six or eight weeks, giving them a grass pasture.

For water fountains, I use the inverted gallon cans on saucers; they are simple and easy to keep clean. It is not necessary to have running water. A sunken basin made of cement in the ground makes an excellent place for them to take a bath, for they do enjoy it.

"Much has been said about care and feeding of the Indian Runner ducks, but let me say right here that it is the product from the Runners that gives them value to the open-eyed farmer. Their eggs are larger than and just as white as the Leghorn eggs, and a basketful of Runner eggs taken into a city or country town will more than take the eyes of people who are lovers of eggs. My own experience proved this true, for my wife took several dozen to have a photo made from them, and they were all sold before she was out of the photo gallery, at an advanced price over the highest market price of hens' eggs, and orders followed her home for more of the eggs.

"Every good sound-minded farmer knows that anything fancy is out of the farmers' line; what they want is practical results. They want something in return for their money. My advice, as a farmer, to all farmer friends when buying eggs or stock is to get the real true Indian Runners, and not mere "fancy stock," unless you want to attend the shows and take in 50-cent premiums. Compare this with a basketful of nice large white eggs that will put smiles on all that see them and want them.

"Now to give real facts concerning the Runners. Although breeders advertise them as "Great Money Makers," don't for a minute think that the Runners are going to do it all themselves. You may think just buying some, taking them home, letting them out and giving them the run that they are going to have, will make you rich. Not a bit of it! Any more than a good Jersey cow will on poor pasture! You must feed that cow first before you expect to get much returns; so with the Runner duck.

Give her half a chance! She is built to produce something. She will hold her end as a forager and make her own living any way; but just give her *real feed, and she will keep you carrying baskets of eggs every morning almost the year 'round* if you have a large flock. Our correspondence shows that all are satisfied who have tried the white-egg strain of Runners, English type.

"We grow Alfalfa by the ton, and have equipped the feeding room in our poultry house with a gasoline engine and Alfalfa cutter that cuts the hay into ⅛-inch lengths. We mix this in all our mash for the poultry and we *know that it saves 40 per cent of our feed bills with the Runners.* Too much cannot be said concerning Alfalfa for ducks and poultry. The Cornell University people sent me their feeding ration for breeding stock, and I tried it, thoroughly, for months. It is a good one: 70 pounds corn meal, 15 pounds bran, 10 pounds middlings, 15 pounds whole oats, 25 pounds wheat and 15 pounds meat scrap. Give them a moist mash of this in the morning, and let them run on grass range or the Alfalfa field. Give them a little corn and wheat at night. I never failed to get lots of eggs, and hatchable eggs, too.

"I know that the American people are going to demand the English type of white-egg Runners when they wake up from their slumbers over the short-bodied, dumpy, green-egg sort that are only a fad for a few short years."

One of the points New York market is strenuous on lately is that eggs that meet the requirements of first-class stock must "stand up well," must be "full-bodied," and firm as to the contents, especially the albumen, or "white." Candlers find out "all about" the inside of an egg, you see. Note, please, that the new laid Indian Runner egg *has just this wanted quality,* above the average *best* hens' eggs.

On a New Hampshire farm, one clever grower with initiative to find new ways of making the Runners profitable to him,

wrote me of this "dodge.": "I find ducks valuable for two reasons not mentioned in the papers. I use the Cornell [Agricultural College] A brooder, 8x8 feet, *without the heat,* and I put in a few young ducks with my chicks. The houses are as free from lice as a parlor, with no more attention from me, and the chicks are the best I ever raised, none naked or droopy. Before having ducks, I lost many by hawks. Now, I keep all in a covered run until the first ducks get their voices, then I let them all go, and hawks are seen no more."

Manifestly, this is intended to show that the noise of the ducks keeps the hawks off. Some may put this with the stories of the Indian Runners being so very quiet, and wonder whether "two and two make four," as of old! They do, even as of old. The ducks *are very quiet, unless there is reason to make a noise,* in which case, they can "raise the roof." For this, I am often devoutly thankful, as is many another living in or near town and factory conditions. If the ducks go to bed hungry look out for your slumber! You won't be allowed to take it. And if there is danger, shown by noise and commotion generally, take your cue and find out why—and, do it quickly!

Feeding Methods Safe for All

CHAPTER X

There is a knack about the handling of ducks which has to be learned. It is fortunate that it can be learned quite readily from the literature. Much of it lies in knowing just where ducks differ from hens, in their requirements. The love of ducks for the water is well known, and the very fact that they fall in the "Water Fowl" class affirms it.

Still, it is very difficult to some to realize that ducks always need drinking water before they need feed; and, on the other hand, it is difficult to realize that ducks can be raised virtually as land birds, with no water but that which a tub may hold; and that, if they have good grass range, they will not seem to suffer material immediate deterioration. It is, of course, much harder work to raise yarded ducks without running water, since they love to play in water, will waste much that is provided for them, and cannot be neglected in this matter. If they are without drinking water a single half hour, they become uneasy, noisy, and obtrusive of their sufferings. In small quarters, ducks are said to be, in general, the most easily managed of all domestic fowls; (some say, the most profitable, also.) I saw an instance of this, as far as it relates to housing, which was a revelation as

to the easy adaptability of ducks to the conditions which they must needs meet. The duck shelter to which I refer was just a one-room, dirt-floor, double-pitch arrangement, the upper half of the usual siding being replaced by wire netting. The floor measurement may have been ten by twelve feet. Through the center, lengthwise, nearly the whole length, ran an alley. At one end and on the sides of this alley, were, I think, seven pens for ducks. The cat was not there to be "swung," but I am sure there was not room in any one of these divisions. Yet, the ducks seemed to be doing well enough. The matter that saved the situation was that the shelter stood at the head of a steep slope, and there was running water at the bottom to which the mature birds had continual access. Such confined quarters ("sevenths," rather) are not to be advised; but the story shows how especial care in one direction may offset, when necessary, some neglect or lack in another.

Duck houses are of the simplest construction, and about the only need is a roof with three or four walls, and some rather deep, clean litter. Many times, they prefer to sit out, entirely exposed to the weather. But this is a matter which affects their breeding value much, in some seasons. A valuable breeding bird requires comfort, and if she have not a comfortable shelter and warm litter, many of her eggs will be wasted through chilling, during the early part of the year. One should not forget that, although ducks are water fowl, they need dry shelters and drained soil, at least near their sleeping place. I have seen ordinary puddle ducks, probably once kin to the Rouen aristocracy, sit all night in the dead of winter on a pond, just where it was fed from a living spring. But these ducks were not expected to lay until March.

The foregoing remarks indicate the general handling which goes to the making of a vigorous breeder, or a vigorous layer. The market duck is handled differently while growing, especially in the matter of feed. The very sweeping statement has been

made that there is only one duck for profit, as that one is so far superior to all the others. But this statement was penned eleven years ago, when the very name of Indian Runner was practically unknown in this country. More recently, an extensive grower of the big, market ducks has told me that, in his opinion, there would never be any market for the Indian Runner. Fortunately growers of Indian Runners are disproving this to some extent, although at the present writing, these ducks are unknown to the majority, probably, of city commission men. Indeed, in New York City itself, I have found few firms familiar with the Indian Runner by name. The author of "Poultry Craft" says that *exclusive* duck farming can be made profitable only near a large city, where there is a good demand for ducks; a few ducks, he admits, can be grown profitably almost anywhere. The same author says that, on large plants, the estimated cost of growing is up to eight cents a pound, and that special duck farmers would soon have to go out of business through the very fouling of the soil, and its consequent unhealthfulness, did they not use the latter part of the summer season in making it sanitary through the use of growing crops.

Fortunately, the Indian Runner can make good so fully in a single, special line, that of egg production the year around, that we scarcely need to listen to the market men, no matter what they have to say about real, market ducks. The Runner breeders will have only to dispose of their worn-out layers. And, the Runners lay well until several years old, according to testimony.

The feed, then, will not usually be that of the market duck, but that of the breeder and layer. One part green food to two parts grain mixture largely in mash is the general rule to produce a well-framed duck. All will be fed on this basis till, possibly eight weeks old. After this, the market duck needs more corn in some form. The stock to be grown on is kept on about the same ration right along till it is time for laying to begin.

It is understood that meat is always fed after the ducklings are a few days or a week old, the amount being increased as the birds get larger. Ten per cent is about the average given to the ducks well started, which is sometimes increased to twelve per cent just before fattening time, if they are to go to market.

As to substituting milk for meat, a very successful feeder tells me that he regards bone as more essential than meat. Milk is safer than meat, because meat is so uneven in quality and often poor, but he would use bone in connection with milk. I regard this as an extremely valuable suggestion.

If a single article of food were to be mentioned as of more value to duck breeders than any other, doubtless it would be bran. Bran, however, differs, in these times, from the older mill product, and modern brans are not all alike. I wish to impress especially the need of securing a good grade of feeding stuffs for ducks. Tainted meat, or moldy ground stuff will work quick havoc with ducklings, at almost any age. Some time ago, a correspondent wrote to inquire what could be done for the ducklings, which had suddenly begun to die by the score and almost by the hundred. Every possible point of failure was canvassed, but handling seemed to be correct upon all, till we came to the question of spoiled food. Then it came out that a mill which had been relied upon, was putting out a product made from grains that had virtually become rotted in the fields.

Ducks have a desirable quality in the fact that they will not eat when really sick, and thus they have some chance to recover. The universal testimony is that a duck well-hatched is as good as raised, after one gets the knack, and the chief difficulty in raising ducks inheres in their greedy desire to gorge themselves, combined with neglect, by their owner, to make sure that they always have water to help them at this weak point. Dry feed *and withheld water* are the duck's worst combination foe. Considerable can be done to ward off trouble by soaking the cracked corn which is used, for an hour or so before feeding it. (The

only point to watch out against is letting it ferment in extreme warm weather.) Being then swollen before it is eaten, it will not make trouble by swelling after being eaten. The duck has no crop proper, like the hen. The feed is passed into the stomach, and thence through the other organs of digestion. The duckling eats eagerly and often. This is, no doubt, the chief reason why it does not do to use too much hard, dry grain, or to omit water at any time. We have found much satisfaction in feeding stale bread soaked in milk, in connection with bran, for the first few weeks. Cracked corn is used for one meal a day, and clover, cut sweet-corn stalks, grass, rape, weeds, cabbage, beet pulp and other things that may be handy, help out the growers who may not have grass range.

The matter of shade is one which must never be overlooked. I have seen, on farms where there was abundance of delightful shade, both duck and chicken coops located out in the open, under a broiling July or August sun. At the same time, the shallow water dishes were entirely dry, it might be for hours. Such ducks and chickens are pre-destined to die of mysterious (?) causes, and none can ward this off till shade and water become a part of the constant conditions under which they grow. Ducks are very sensitive to the heat of summer suns, and I have seen even the less sensitive chickens thrown into convulsions or limberneck during the awful heat of midsummer conditions without shade. The best of things can, however, be overdone. *The one safe way is to make both shade and sunshine free to the younglings,* and let them choose for themselves which they will take at any one time. It is not necessary, as one breeder did, when told to provide shade, to coop the ducks so that they could not get from under the dense shade of an overhead grape arbor. Even summer days vary much, and summer nights become as cold as autumn, at times. I have worn mittens on the fourth of July, and even then suffered with the cold, in New York state. An exception, of course, but one never

knows when an exception may arise. Forethought is one's best defence, and must be a continual part of the poultryman's panoply.

It is altogether better to feed and water outside the shelters, except under very unusual conditions. All who keep ducks under conditions which require yarding, make much use of small grit, and many use charcoal also, at least, occasionally. Charcoal is especially good in the case of trouble with indigestion. But, inasmuch as the old saw about locking the barn after the horse is stolen applies with great force to ducks, the wise duck grower studies his conditions carefully, and so plans as to render impossible, those things which are likely to make trouble in the duck yard.

One careful grower known to me who would by no means be caught napping about anything in the regular preventive line, has lost a large bunch of ducks through hunters; another, through the ducklings having eaten rose beetles.

The sexes are usually about equally represented in the young stock. Occasionally, a freakish hatch may be very unequal. One buyer, in 1910, reported one duck and nine drakes raised from one setting of eggs; while another, more under fortune's care, apparently, reports, on the very morning when I am writing this chapter, three drakes to nine ducks.

One breeder suggests that real beginners could more easily enter upon poultry culture with Indian Runners than with any variety of hens, because they "would meet with but few of the vexing problems and setbacks that would fall to their lot if they tackled chickens." The first requisite in handling, he says, is to get pure-bred Runners, "free from crossing with Pekin and other ducks."

To speak definitely of our own experience, I may say that we have hatched and raised our Runners entirely with hens. Early in the season, I give not more than nine eggs to a hen. This is equal to 13 hens' eggs. A nest with a sod or earth

Nestlings of English-bred Runners

bottom is best. The eggs are supposed to hatch in 28 days, but I have had a brood all out and in the coop before the end of the 28th day. The ducklings require little feed the first day or two. I do not try to feed them till they begin to look for it, for they do not need it earlier. They should have water in a shallow dish so that they cannot get wet in it, and this means refilling it often. The first feed is stale bread soaked in sweet milk. If I couldn't get this, I think, from my present knowledge, I might feed Spratt's Duck feed, just at first. After a very few days, I add to the soaked bread a little bran and middlings, a little ground corn and oats with the hulls sifted out, and some clean sand or fine grit. Just as soon as they will eat it, I work in succulent feed in the way of chopped cabbage, lettuce, rape or similar greens. If the green juicy stuff is not available, scalded cut clover is excellent. But something of this character is imperative for ducks, unless they have abundant good pasturage. I feed five times daily for the first few weeks, and mix in a little sand once daily. *At least* one feed is of green stuff. After a few days, I add a little good beef scrap; the less milk the more scrap. Don't use scrap that smells like fertilizer. And be sure all feed is sound and sweet. If the milk sours, I would make it into curds and mix with the other ingredients, and use a little more bran in proportion.

The ducklings are very sensitive to cold and wet for the first few days of their lives. They must have protection from storms till they are feathered. I have found them so nearly drowned by a sudden, hard shower that reviving them seemed hopeless. But drying and warming them by the kitchen range put renewed life into the chilled bodies, and they seemed none the worse for the wetting. Their recuperative powers seem to be great. They will reach the point where they do not need the hen sooner than will chicks. But they should always have some shelter to which they can retreat. An open shed seems to suit them admirably.

A shed-like house, situated on sloping land, usually open to the sun, but planned to close at night when necessary and having good litter, about covers the real needs, as to shelter, for the breeding ducks, or the layers. At the south I would board only on the side of the prevailing wind.

Concerning the most deeply interesting point, as to how freely the Indian Runners will lay in the "off" season for hens' eggs, testimony varies so much as to convince me that it is quite a matter of handling.

The H— ducks lay during the moulting season, and on into the extreme cold months. The report is, 75 per cent of them laying by February 1. And that the (large) flock averaged 99 eggs per duck in 108 days; also, that the eggs laid during the five poorer months of the year will "more than pay all expenses of feed, shipping baskets, printing and advertising for the entire year."

Mrs. Brooks's birds lay during the moult (to a lesser extent than in spring, of course) and she ships eggs for hatching in November, the sparsest month of the year for hens' eggs. One breeder, writing in November, says: "Every mail brings reports of ducks from my eggs laying."

Judge Clipp says that he sees duck eggs in the exhibition coops of the Runners at midwinter (even after trying shipments). The early hatched may begin to lay in July, and "anybody's" will lay in February. Mr. Hurt says that the very slender neck, long, thin body and alert carriage characterize *the best layers.* "The White Queen," the best bird I have seen in America, as regards genuine type, may well serve as a model for those who would fix the correct type firmly in mind. Compare her with Walton's ideal sketches, published in this country in May, 1910, and see how little she lacks of meeting them. Is she not, in fact, far more beautiful?

Having a good, laying type, one needs to provide comfortable housing at night, a spot sheltered from winds during the

days, and liberal rations, with a goodly proportion of meat. This sums up the matter of the egg harvest.

I must not, however, leave any one with the impression that only one method of feeding will do for Indian Runner Ducks, or other ducks. The methods most commonly recommended in handling ducks have been gleaned chiefly from the handling of the men who raise them commercially, for the sake of the carcass. They are the methods of those who yard their ducks, and push them almost beyond reason when they are to go to market early.

On the farm, especially where there is abundant room and natural water privileges, one may do differently. I am accustomed to a rough mental grouping of feeds which is easily possible to any feeder. It includes the starchy feeds, which are heat and fat makers, (including fats themselves with the fat makers, at a higher value); the muscle and egg makers form my second group; the green feeds, clover meals, vegetables, form the third. If birds are on free, good range, we need not think much about this third class. If not, we must make much of it, and use its members in large proportion. We must remember that grass is not the same as hay, because it is so largely water. Proportions may be roughly in one's mind, something like one part of muscle-makers to two of fat and six or seven of the starchy things (which means, mostly, the grains in their natural state, unground and undivided as to food values). To produce eggs, one adds a larger proportion of the muscle-makers, like peas, beans, meat, etc. This is all that is necessary for a feeder to know, except whether any special feed ranks high as a muscle-maker or a fat maker. This is really the base of that far more elaborate thing called "scientific feeding."

From S. H. Scott, Onehunga, New Zealand: "My Wonder kept on laying till she had laid 200 eggs in 205 days, after which she went into a partial moult. But that did not stop her from shelling out her large eggs each morning. I want readers

of this article to understand fully that I did not force her for egg production. All she got was quite plain, viz., brewers' grains, pollard or sharps, bran and chopped green stuff, all mixed up into a mash not too wet. I also gave the same mash twice a day, a real good feed each time, and occasionally a handful of wheat or maize. The mash was made as follows, the same as I feed all my ducks: one-half brewers' grains, the other half composed of Pollard and bran (more pollard than bran). The greens are added. I consider a good strain of Runner ducks, allowed to mature, given free range, fed with good, wholesome food such as bran and pollard mixed with greens (one meal a day can be either maize or wheat) ducks treated so must lay well and pay well, and will beat hens hollow, both in the number of eggs laid, also in profit to their owner."

A feeding-point which I want all to notice is that there is virtually little difference in the feeding practices of different handlers. Barring some variations in proportion, nearly all are using the cheap, common feeds: bran, Alfalfa, green or dry, all green stuffs available, and a little corn or wheat for a one-feed per day grain. One has used some buckwheat; one uses some oats, even for the babies, but sifts out the hulls. Sprouted oats are as good for yarded ducks as for hens and chicks.

It will be a great good for all if our southern friends will try some of the special feeds of their localities, carefully, and report results. One southern breeder will try peanuts. Mr. Stoddard, Riviera, Texas, is advocating wire-net housing for fowls in that locality. All these hints must set us thinking and experimenting.

A very practical difficulty which meets the handlers of laying ducks is that, in mid-winter, the ducks, being largely night layers, must be in reasonably warm quarters, or the eggs will freeze. Breeders of ducks especially noted for laying should, therefore, plan for warmer housing than others find necessary. This does not mean that they must provide close, stuffy houses, for these

will not work for the good health and vigor of the stock. The *best thing any one can do* to make his shelters warm for stock of any kind is to locate them where they are sheltered from wind. The closer they are to shelter on the windward side, the warmer they will be. A second good aid toward the needed warmth for laying ducks, is deep, soft litter. If this occupies only such portion of the floor as will accommodate the inmates comfortably, they will group themselves there; as they are very partial to a nice bed. Thus, their bodies will keep the eggs warm, and early rising on the part of the handler will do the rest.

The one who handles our ducks recently planned some very simple houses, which have been put up experimentally. They are really only deep sheds, being six feet wide and 12 feet deep. The height at the front is six and one-half feet, and at the back it drops to 40 inches. The houses are boarded closely, and covered both on roof and sides with one of the commercial roofings. The front is entirely filled by two curtains which drop against the strip binding the house in front, and which open flat against the roof whenever desirable. The more they are up, the better for the birds.

This house has been planned to meet several difficulties which experience showed. The door is on the side, rather close to the front. It is double, having an outer solid shutter and an inner frame covered with wire netting. The depth of the house is to permit the easy handling of litter which I mentioned; to allow, also, feeding near the front on stormy days, and to protect from inblowing wet and snow. The curtains are of cheap muslin. A man who had used duck, which used to be so much recommended, told me that he thought the muslin much better. The duck does not permit sufficient influx of air, he said. Were it not for the color and weight, which darken the inner house somewhat, I should use loose bagging, nearly always available on the farm at no cost. We do use it wherever possible.

Ever since I have taken special interest in poultry, Editor

Hunter has been trying to drum it into the heads of all whom it may concern that the three points necessary to winter hens' eggs are early hatching, good "growing" and pullets for a stand-by. In similar way, I might make three points for ducks; early hatching, proper feeding, comfortable housing. Without all these the duck will not often give returns in winter, at least at the north. The very word, "returns" points to the fact that she must RECEIVE first. Let no breeder forget this.

Even when she has given her returns in eggs, it yet remains for her owner so to educate or to select his market that the cash returns shall be of the best. This matter is one in which our southern people should be especially interested, as they have the best chance, on account of their climate. In March, 1910, a produce reporting paper gave 22½ to 23 cents as the lowest price for hens' eggs, reached up to the date of report, during that season. On the same date it was reported that duck eggs were beginning to move toward the New York market. They were classed as "Baltimore" eggs, though some came from Tennessee "and other western points." Baltimore duck eggs were reported as bringing 42c. at the same time that hens' eggs were bringing a cent or two more than ONE-HALF this price. When we have actual market reports showing what is possible in the line of returns from duck eggs, at least during a portion of the season, we do not need to guess. And I note that southern inquirers are plentiful, and eager. Europe sent us a good many cases of eggs last year. Shall we not rather raise our own? I note in certain market news that prices drop to "almost one-half" on duck eggs, after Easter. But, if this one-half is even then equal to the price of hens' eggs, none need complain very bitterly. The market for duck eggs has to work itself out, but it seems to be doing very well. And I think it may be expected to improve steadily, once the Indian Runner eggs get a hold in city markets. Ignorant old New York will get them after a little, and LEARN SOMETHING TO HER ADVANTAGE!

A mid-west breeder of Runners gives, as an ideal ration for any old ducks: mash made of wheat bran, corn meal, alfalfa meal and beef scraps. He says that with dry housing and *water at night in all cases,* the egg output is sure, regardless of climatic or weather conditions. He likes corn, fed sparingly and intelligently, and says that ducks "do not prefer an abrupt change, preferring a constant 'one-thing' rather." He finds that ducks trained to receive a grain-ration with the bulky food appear to enjoy it, but places all corn in the water troughs to soak a little. "Otherwise, they may get a rather packed crop of dry, hard grain." This writer says that ducklings will "invariably" grow better and develop much faster when they have a good supply of water, both at night and during meals. He makes mash at least two-thirds the ration, in bulk, in cold weather and for laying, and says that if ducks are well raised and kept warm and comfortable during the winter at all times, they "will lay without faltering." I think this is rather near the secret of getting winter eggs from ducks: a rich and ample ration, with reasonable uniformity of conditions both as to feed and housing. The same man tells of finding a breeder who was complaining of no eggs, plucking his ducks every six weeks! This is sufficient to explain any lack of eggs under even the best conditions, otherwise.

In yard conditions, without natural water supply, the filthy and ill-smelling conditions become an acute menace, and the ducks are not a matter of pride to the raiser. On heavy land, I would not raise ducks thus, without a sharp slope for drainage of surplus water. But, on light land, one may dodge this issue by excavating a fair-sized hole, laying over it a stiffened wire netting, and setting the water dishes on this netting. In case of bad odors, a covering of fresh earth, or a sprinkling of some safe disinfectant is indicated.

One breeder, who has raised several kinds of ducks, including the Imperial Pekins, says that the Indian Runner is, by

far, the most profitable, and that it is much easier to induce the Runners to lay in extreme weather than to get eggs from hens. The methods on this place include a house 16 ft. by 25 ft. and a yard 24 ft. wide and 100 ft. long to each forty ducks. The layers are fed four times a day; a grain and vegetable mash early and at night, with two lighter meals in between. The breeder says: "Twice a week a little raw cut bone or some beef scraps are added to the mash. Cooked vegetables with some milk added and then thickened with equal parts cornmeal and bran forms a mixture that ducks thrive upon. Either bran or something green should form a part of every meal in winter. Both are important factors in duck feeding." This is quoted from an article in the "American Poultry Advocate." The same breeder mentions cutting rye when it is frozen and storing it for the ducks; also the use of cut clover or alfalfa scalded, and thinks it much better to provide grit separately, not mixing it with the feed.

On the other hand, Mrs. Mellette tells an inquirer not getting enough eggs, who feeds "mill feed, ground barley and wheat, with grit and charcoal in a hopper and all the grass they want," that this is not a suitable ration for ducks, and that their grit should be mixed with the mash; as should also the green feed. This last is probably the custom of the great majority of breeders of yarded ducks.

Mrs. Mellette also says that purchasers are not asking the color of the drakes' heads, but "Do your ducks lay a white egg?" She says that the ducks do not seek shelter in heavy California rains. Last winter she had a flock of ducks laying in December that were hatched in July,—the last day of the month. The ducks lay there "steadily during the winter season, when eggs are 60c a dozen," she says, also, that the table birds bring from 85c to a dollar, according to the demand. Answering in detail just what should be fed to grown ducks, she replies: "First, a duck needs green feed, then meat in some form, next shell and

A Simple, Sufficient Duck House

American Standard Male

American Standard Male

Both Winners in Strong Competition

(Courtesy of M. E Newell)

bone, and after that, a good, rich mash." As ingredients of the mash, she uses rice meal, ground oats, "balanced ration" meal, rolled barley soaked till swelled, and some wheat. This mash is fed three times a day when pushing for eggs. During the rest season she feeds little to ducks on good range.

Although hundreds and doubtless thousands of Runners are raised, both here and abroad, without water for swimming, it is not natural, and we should, I think, consider the natural state of a bird as much as artificial needs will allow. It looks reasonable to me that the exercise of swimming must strengthen the abdominal parts and legs, and make for better fertility in the eggs, or at least, better hatchability. Also, that the water bath would help to keep down inflammation, in case of straining from laying extra large eggs, or other reason.

It is also true that the duck, in nature, probably moistens her eggs each time she returns to the nest, because her feathers are moist. This points to nests on the ground, or ground at least sprinkled occasionally, to give moist atmosphere. Play in the water gives vigor, delight, and activity, and the ducks often mate while on the water.

You will notice that ducks cannot keep their plumage in good condition unless they can have a water bath, at least in muddy weather. Yet, the water which is their greatest necessity is also one of their gravest dangers. It is not at all safe to allow the young the freedom of ponds, swales or any other place which enemies haunt until fully grown. Turtles and other vermin make inroads into the flock and dogs run ducks down much more quickly and surely than they do hens, unless the ducks take to flight. Hunters are even more dangerous and lawless.

A beginner cannot distinguish the sex till the sex feathers come with the second coat—shown by the curl on the drake's tail. With more experience, the size and breadth of bill and general appearance will help some, and the heavy quack of the

duck will distinguish her, some weeks before the sex feathers appear.

Mr. Root says in his journal: "Both of my ducks have blue bills, while the two drakes have yellow bills; this is probably accidental." He thinks the first edition of this book gave too much space to native country, coloring "and ducks that lay only white eggs instead of eggs that are slightly tinted green or blue." But a little *more* of this class of information would have told him that the Standard demands dull, cucumber-green in bills of ducks and greenish-yellow in drakes, when matured.

One of the large growers of market ducks, who raises from 20,000 upward each season, says of ducks in general that he considers that the average man has as good a chance to succeed with ducks as with any branch of poultry raising, and that some men have the best chance with ducks.

Because he is a man of such wide experience, I will give his method of using machines for hatching, as told in "The Poultry Advocate" in 1910, though not quoting much literally. He believes that ducks hatched during the first two weeks in May make the best breeders. He places his young birds intended for breeders on sod, with access to a stream, at eight weeks of age. Bran, corn-meal and middlings, equal parts, with eight per cent of beef scraps, form their entire ration, fed twice daily till mid-November. As his main food for getting eggs, he gives:

"One part bran; one part middlings; one part low grade flour; one part whole corn; two parts whole wheat; two parts cornmeal; four parts cut clover hay; twelve per cent beef scrap, sand, grit and oyster shells, all they will eat; mix with water till crumbly."

Eggs for hatching are washed very lightly and carefully, if they are much soiled. "We set daily, and find we get better results than when we used to set every four days," he says. The (Cyphers) machines are run at 102 the first two weeks, at 102½

for a week more, then a week at 103, running up to 104 and 105 at the hatching period. Eggs are turned once a day till the first test, at end of first week; after this twice daily till they pip. Then all pipped eggs are turned the pipped side up, and the machine closed till hatch is complete. "A 350-egg machine will accommodate 288 duck eggs, and if you average 150 good ducklings throughout the season, you are doing well."

When dry, the ducklings are removed to brooders with overhead water heat, the temperature held at ninety. Water and coarse sand are given at once. Next morning the first feed, "Spratt's Patent No. 5," is fed, being continued for four days, when they are gradually worked on to mash. This mash consists of six parts bran, two each of corn meal and middlings, one part low grade flour, five parts cut green feed, and ten per cent of beef scrap. This is the ration, up to eight weeks, when the breeders are separated and fed as above noted, and the market ducks get more corn meal, (twice as much) more flour and a little more beef scrap. The cut green feed is lawn clips, cut green clover, corn fodder, Essex rape or wheat. At ten weeks they go to market. They have had water only to drink, and all precautions are taken to keep them out of the water. "A muddy or dirty duck will not thrive." This man says that one cent a pound additional cost of production means one thousand dollars loss to him; he is, therefore, good authority to tie to, because he *knows* what gives best results. He says it is important to have sandy or well-drained soil. "Water in the right place is good, but remember, the day of the puddle duck is past. To get the price to-day, your ducks must be raised under sanitary conditions, and ducklings so raised show the benefit of such treatment."

System and Forethought in Making a Market

CHAPTER XI

Up to the time of the present writing, Indian Runner ducks have been kept so busy in supplying the demand for eggs for hatching, that they have not had time to "bother" with market eggs. The fact that the young grow to mature size in the short period of something like twelve weeks has made it possible to sell hatching eggs freely during two-thirds of the year, even to northern breeders, while those who want eggs to go south will take them at almost any time except in the very hottest months. Some do not even make this exception. A letter received late in November says: "I am filling some orders to southern customers. The half-Waltons are doing a good share of the laying." A note received in late October of this year from a well-known breeder, mentioned just having taken off a fine hatch of ducklings from the incubators, and said that he was still hatching for himself every egg he could hold to. I do not think the later hatched birds ever attain such good size, but they help out while stock is still scarce. Among the early hatched birds, in our own yards, we frequently have males which go a half-pound above Standard weight.

Last year, a breeder told me that he filled one order for 5,000 eggs. Perhaps others fill even larger ones. But he was obliged to call on neighbor breeders for quite a proportion of his order; since it would take 250 ducks three weeks to lay 5,000 eggs, even if every duck laid every day, and every egg was perfect. This is, of course, beyond the limit of laying for any flock of domestic fowls of this size. Or for any flock.

"What sellers they are!" is a suggestive sentence regarding Indian Runners, from a private letter received here in October, 1910. This attribute has belonged to these ducks ever since I have known anything about them. The demand has snapped up,—usually before winter,—all that could be raised, for breeding; and even then it was not satisfied with the amount of the supply. This market, both for eggs and for stock has, in one sense, made itself.

But, in the future, as the farms work more into raising Indian Runners, there will need to be some systematic effort to make markets which will take all the supply at a satisfactory price. Considering the matter of price from the actual, intrinsic value, since the eggs of the Runner average to weigh one-half more than the standard, market hens' eggs, they should be worth one-half more. This must be discounted a little by the fact that "an egg's an egg," and, for strictly table use, three hens' eggs will "go farther" than two ducks' eggs (usually serving three persons,) though the eaters will not get the same amount of nutriment. There is also the old prejudice against ducks' eggs to be reckoned with. Judging by intrinsic value alone, when hens' eggs bring forty cents in a firm market, Indian Runner ducks' eggs should be worthy sixty cents. Whether we shall ever attain to this as a permanent standard of comparative values, I am unable to prophesy. At Easter, I think there will be no difficulty in doing it; at other times, until the market is firmly established, we may, perhaps, find it necessary to take a price from five to ten cents above the market price of hens' eggs at any given time, or less at some seasons.

I know of one case in which in New York market, a breeder sold Indian Runner eggs in crate lots, at 17c and upward, *more* than the going price for fine hens' eggs. This was at Easter time, and several years ago, even before all eggs were as high in price all the time as is now the case. I know, too, of a certain physician, practising in a small town, who recommended Indian Runner eggs for his patients, as preferable to hens' eggs. In that city, the Runner eggs have brought at least five cents more than hens' eggs, regularly, through some years and down to the present time. This does not seem enough, *but when we remember that the Runners are more prolific than hens, that they lay during a longer average period, and that they will thrive on coarser feed, with less coddling, and with cheaper housing, the argument in favor of the Runners is pretty strong.*

There is one point about selling which I want to make as emphatic as possible. This is: the sellers must ignore the prejudice against duck eggs—a relic of a careless age, or poorer ducks—except when obliged to meet it through the inquiry of a possible customer! Talk about the good qualities of the Runner eggs, and especially about their size and their sweetness. They have both, so that your arguments are ready for you in the goods you have to sell, regardless of the class of goods your grandfathers sold. If you have eggs enough to warrant it, put an advertisement into your town paper, offering eggs at a stated price, and telling the points in which they are *superior* to hens' eggs. When the people have read it times enough, they will believe it. This is the best way to make a market for any poultry products, if you have enough to make it an object. It costs very little, and it enables you to sell birds when they are ready, instead of holding the good till the backward catch up, which they seldom really do. Besides, if you word your notices to that end, you are educating your possible customers up to your class of product, and when they want stuff, they will seek you.

While I do not, at present, urge that the Indian Runner

be grown specifically as a market duck, our recent experience shows that it can be thus grown, and profitably so. We placed, in the village paper, a fifteen-word advertisement offering table ducks, at door, alive, at one dollar each. A single insertion sold all we had to spare, within two weeks. A little earlier, we made an opening into the trade of a high class city club, at the same price, dressed. It makes little difference as to the last, if one have the time for the work, as the feathers will more than pay for it. Inasmuch as ducks, like the commoner fowls, come about half males, there is always a surplus of these. There will also be a proportion of old ducks to work off, each year. I think it would be better, in general, to send these in one lot, to a city market.

Selling anything is a psychological experience. Many are good salesmen, because they have some natural keenness which enables them to go about it right. Experience may add much, also. And, because it is a psychological thing, it may be learned through a general study of psychology, the results of which will apply to every experience in business, social or family life. It sounds fearsome, but it is fascinating and practical.

For those who cannot help to *build up* a market, there are opportunities now which were never before offered. One eastern firm is offering, during the autumn of 1910, highest market rates on good poultry of all kinds, and furnishing coops, returning the price of coops when they reach the store with their consignment of poultry.

Educating the Market

CHAPTER XII

One morning, I invaded the down-town streets of the biggest city, where Commission Houses are thickest. I interviewed men whom I knew to have been selling Indian Runner eggs, and men I had never heard of. I questioned small dealers in produce from the farms, and the oldest and largest firm, I think, in the business in New York. At least, I was told that they were one of the oldest and largest, and knew eggs from A. to Z., and back again!

At this last place, I struck what seems to me the key to the situation, in this as in other matters. And it is along the line of what I said last year. "*We* can't educate the market," said the firm's representative, protestingly; we aren't near enough to the consumers. We have to take what comes to us, and sell it if we can, and that is the whole of the Commission business. If the market is to be educated to the use of duck eggs, some one else must do it!"

Very few firms would allow that Indian Runner or any other duck eggs were wanted in New York, during the latter part of the year. The market has not been used to them, and a large proportion of the buyers are prejudiced against them. There

are some nationalities that like them, however. The Irish, it is said, are so partial to green that they will even take a green duck egg.

The situation in New York at the time of writing—November—is about like this: "Very few near-by eggs are arriving, and these, even when from henneries, are often badly mixed with old eggs. New laid quality has become very scarce and it is hard to get enough fancy whites to supply even the limited demand. Values are quite irregular. Very fancy, large, new laid, hennery whites could be peddled out up to 43c and 45c, but there are very few such; and jobbers would hardly pay more than 41c and 42c for the best." This was the report of The New York Produce Review, under date of Oct. 18, 1911. At the same time, in another column, fine lots of "strictly fine full, strong-bodied fresh (western) were rated at 28c for the best." There are some lots of western graded and candled eggs which even though showing very little dead loss, contain too few full fresh to exceed 22c and 23c. The better grades of regular packed western have had a moderate demand at 24c and 25c, these passing fairly high in the grade of firsts. Occasionally, a lot of ungraded stock shows enough new laid quality to reach 26c, but there are not many as good as that. One other sentence: "There is fair call for *useful* summer eggs at 17c and 18c."

Here, we have what seems to me a situation impossible to hold: a market keen for large, fancy white eggs, reaching in early autumn as high as 45c at the extreme; a perfectly good, sweet large fancy white egg in sight for this market so that it may have a good supply, and the market looking askance at this offered egg because, forsooth, of a "prejudice." "Fresh dirties" and "checks" western ungraded and "useful summer" sorts—all these are attractive to the buyer, but not the strictly white, translucent, extra large fancy which is knocking at the market door! Does it seem to you that such a condition will hold

long? Do you not begin to wonder what is the underlying reason for the unhelpful attitude of the Commision Houses toward the Indian Runner egg? I have not yet been able to ferret out the reason for this attitude.

I put it up to the representative of one of the largest houses: "Is it not reasonable to suppose that a perfectly good food product like the Indian Runner egg will make its own market, in time, when it begins to come in in quantity?" After some hesitation, the point was admitted. "Yes; it would sell at some price. You can sell anything in New York, if you will sell it cheap enough; but," he concluded, triumphantly, "*that* isn't 'New York Market'."

At another place, while agreeing that New York did not want duck eggs, the representative of the firm (which is selling them for shippers) told me that if they laid well early (which would add to the average price) they would, *even now, equal the average of the Leghorn eggs* in price. He thought that, in time, as the market found that it must deal with the Runner egg, the average price might rise.

At another very large place, while there was still this inexplicable undertone of opposition, or, at least, of doubt, the representative told me that the yearly average price of duck eggs would figure out 35c a dozen, *as things are now.* He said that they would sell to 45c in the spring. Speaking to my question as to this egg making its own market, eventually, he said that while it might go slow at first, it would surely sell. He stated that the Irish and the Germans were good buyers of duck eggs.

Another firm said that the duck egg would undoubtedly make its own market with a premium on hens' eggs, *in time.*

On the day I was in the market, "Leghorn" eggs were quoted up to 38c as the extreme fancy price. Duck eggs were then selling at 25c to 30c. In order to understand the varying reports regarding the Indian Runner eggs as compared with hens' eggs, we need to know two things which are hard to realize: one

is that, before Easter, *duck eggs sell far above hens' eggs,* sometimes being at a premium of 50 per cent; the other is that, later, they bring about the same as hens' eggs, while in autumn, they sometimes fall below.

This last is anomalous, and I think will be reversed when the Indian Runner egg has had time to prove itself. It does not seem reasonable that any market demanding a large, fancy white egg, should long hold aloof from such an egg when offered, simply because it bore a different name from what was customary. Commission men say they cannot deal with theories; they must take facts as they are. They have a hard enough time, some of them think, even at that! It remains, then, to change the facts. The facts are already somewhat different from what they were a year ago. A year ago, scarcely a commission dealer in New York knew about the Indian Runner—or had so much as heard of it. Now, many of them know more or less about it.

I have been considering quite seriously, putting a small adv. in a New York paper, describing the merits of the Indian Runner. Such a move would mean calls upon dealers for the eggs. But it does not seem wise to do this just now, since to work up a call before there is much chance to supply it would be likely to do more harm than good.

Meanwhile, this whole matter narrows down to one of individual business ability. Did it ever occur to you that the reason eggs are such a good farm crop is that *they sell themselves?* Extra business ability may greatly enlarge the income from a specified number. But even without that special ability, the egg crop can be sold to reasonable advantage, because the demand is ahead of the supply of the wanted quality, much of the year.

It is still true that very many who have gone into Runners are disposing of their output as fancy eggs at an inflated price. The number of advertisers known to me this year is nearly

double the number offering Runner eggs for hatching last year. It is coming to this, now: a paper that came in from the south this morning carried a big advertisement, the burden of which was Indian Runner Ducks. It said: "Will have, to arrive today, 50 fawn and White I. R. Ducks. Drop around and see them. Will sell cheap." You must admit that this isn't so bad for a small southern city, so early in the game! I rather think it distances New York. But there is a distinct reason: one of the dailies of this same city has been acting as a sort of wet nurse to the poultry business for several years. Don't tell me enterprise doesn't count! And that is what the individual grower needs.

A letter of this morning said: "If I can only dispose of the product, you need not be greatly surprised to see this farm covered with Indian Runners before many years." This was from a beginner, who had not yet tried the market. Another of my letters from the same state says: "We have 18 pure Indian Runner Ducks to start with. They lay a nice large white egg. We get 50c per dozen the whole year; but yet we know nothing about ducks!"

Another writes: "I am a general farmer and not a poultryman, but I have a flock of 55 ducks (Runners) and a large and growing southern trade. I can increase ad libitum. Have handled Runners four or five years under range, and know what they should be worth to the farmer as well as any one in the United States. Also, I know the good and the harm the fancier does the farmer in poultry, particularly in Runners, and so thoroughly appreciate your good work in this book (first edition of Runner Duck Book.) If I were not an advertiser, I would write more as simple justice to the duck and to advise the south of what it means to it." Later, this breeder wrote me that he had been obliged to return a large proportion of the orders for eggs through inability to supply the stiff demand.

One beginner, who had products to sell for the first, in

the spring of 1911, and from a good-sized flock, sold some of his eggs very early in the New York Commission district at prices above those of hens' eggs. Later, he sold eggs for hatching, and a good many day-old ducklings, getting fifty cents apiece for the best of these.

Mr. Hunter recently took occasion to say: "The Indian Runner is a very small duck, comparable to the Leghorn hen in size, and considerable use has been made of the comparison in the effort to capture public favor." This is exactly the kind of a blunder which might be expected from people who are not breeders of Indian Runners, and who show how little they know about them by just such unnecessary and mistaken flings. As a matter of fact, the *Runner is not as small in proportion to the "mammoth" Pekin as the average Leghorn is in proportion to the huge Brahma.* In the second place, no use whatever has been made of the comparison in size, by Runner breeders.

They compare the Runner to the Leghorn *because* it is an exceptionally active bird, a non-sitter and a phenomenal layer—all of which are claims made decade in and decade out for the Leghorn. They have, heretofore, made no claims for the Indian Runner as a market fowl, because they felt that she could make her record on her laying ability alone.

Now, however, the logic of events makes a record for the Runner as a market duck. Her breeders have not pushed for it; her detractors have gone out of the way to say how small and worth-little she is; and the market shows them all wrong. More might have been claimed than has been claimed! Not even the most rabid commission merchant in New York has said aught but that any duck, well fattened, would sell. And now we see the Indian Runner pushing the Pekin out.

During 1911, the Indian Runner proceeded to make more history as follows (according to the story just published in our most influential poultry publication): On a farm where they handle so much poultry that the feed bill is reported as $150.00

a day, and the housing capacity for growing ducks is 30,000, the Indian Runner has turned things topsy-turvy. The story goes that the Pekin, here, as everywhere in recent years, was the staple market duck. But the proprietors of this farm had a large call for four-pound ducks. To supply this demand, they decided in 1910, to try the Indian Runner. From purchased eggs, they raised 1000 of these ducks. These ducks were reported as reaching the desired four pounds in weight as soon as the Pekin would reach five and one-half pounds, *and doing it on about half the feed.* It is not profitable, these breeders say, to sell the Pekin at four pounds' weight. This is exactly where the Runner gets in its innings. And, whereas all the output formerly went to New York, a local trade has been developed, taking practically all the present product. Hence, it's "a fig for New York," at this plant.

At the time the reporter was at the plant, two young men from the south were there studying the possibilities. Nor is this the first interest the south has shown in this matter. Early in 1911, I received a letter discussing the Indian Runner for the Southern market. A part of it read as follows:—"At the age of five weeks, I haven't a duckling that weighs less than a pound and a half. I never, in all my experience with poultry, saw anything grow like an Indian Runner duckling. My ducklings are the curiosity of the neighborhood, and I am satisfied that I can dispose of both stock and eggs at good prices just as fast as I can produce them. During the greater part of the winter here the temperature rarely falls below 40 degrees, and anything near zero weather is unheard-of in this country. I can hatch ducks all winter, and by spring will have about all I want for my own use. We have here a city of some 40,000 inhabitants, and from what I can learn, there are not a half dozen men within a radius of 300 miles of here that breed the Indian Runner. In addition to that, we have all Mexico south of us, which is rapidly settling up with small farmers. Just

the other day I had an inquiry from away below Mexico City. A local supply man had received a request to put him in touch with some one who had Indian Runners and had referred him to me."

There are other indications which show that the south is not quite asleep and letting this her opportunity pass. A glance over the entries at the Missouri State Poultry Show, even as long ago as late in 1910, might teach a little something. With 409 exhibitors, and 47 varieties named as on exhibition besides a "lot of odds and ends," only twelve varieties could show more specimens than the Indian Runner. Even the Bronze turkey—almost Missouri's patron saint—had only 78 to the Indian Runner's 67. And the Bronze ranks as an old timer, now, while the Runner is just beginning its conquering course.

I wrote to a man in New Hampshire whom I knew to have been raising Indian Runners for eggs during some years, asking him how he found his market. In October, 1911, he said that he was getting thirty cents in Boston market, while offered at the same time, 38c for hens' eggs. Probably the situation would be even more than this in favor of the ducks, in the spring. As time passes, it is my opinion that it will even up at both ends of the season.

This correspondent said: "I don't know how we can better the market, but in time there will be a demand for duck eggs all the year, when people learn of their superiority over hen eggs. Last year, we kept account of the duck eggs laid. Ninety-seven ducks laid 154 each."

I wrote Park and Pollard, the well-known Boston dealers, who, having both been expert poultrymen before going into market handling, are more than usually likely to know their business. They replied: "We have interviewed various egg dealers in the large market in Boston, and find there is a considerable demand all the year around for ducks' eggs. It has been especially good during the later winter and spring, and generally,

the supply has not been equal to the demand. The average price for Indian Runner eggs is five cents per dozen less than the top price for hennery eggs. Regarding the Indian Runners as market ducks, they are not in high favor, as all dealers would prefer a duck that weighs five pounds or more at ten or eleven weeks." Readers must remember that Boston market is, in many respects, exactly the opposite of many other large city markets. And, as *the average of hens' eggs* in market may bring only around half "the top price for hennery eggs," mentioned above, the story is rather favorable for the Runner eggs instead of unfavorable, as one might at first glance think.

Poultry, as well as other history, is in the course of such rapid making that we forget first occurrences and conditions, even though we ourselves were once in the midst of them.

Suppose, for instance, that the poultry public could once more place itself back twenty years or something like this distance, in time, and watch the Pekin duck make its fight for favor as a market duck. In May, of this year of writing, I saw this matter referred to editorially in The American Hen Magazine. This is what was said: "Odd as it may seem, it was the duck growers who first won the victory on a large scale. We say 'odd,' because *the duck men had to create their market.* There was no demand for green ducks, meaning ten and twelve weeks' old Pekins, weighing four to five pounds each, until James Rankin, Easton, Mass., known as the 'father of the Pekin Duck industry in America,' built up trade in this line by sending pairs of tender, green ducks of his production to friends and acquaintances in and around Boston."

The Indian Runner has no such hard task as this, for she finds a market asking for duck meat, and a market asking for large, white, "full-bodied" eggs. She can supply all these. The one thing she has to do is to convince the people that her claims to egg quality are just claims: that she can,—to use a modern phrase, "deliver the goods."

A most excellent suggestion was made public by the late Chauncey E. Anderson, of Pennsylvania. He quoted from the Cleveland Daily Leader, under date of March 23, 1911: "Eggs, fresh gathered, extra firsts, 18½c dozen; firsts, 17½c dozen; current receipts, 16½c dozen; seconds, 15c; duck eggs, 28c and 30c." Following this, Mr. Anderson urged that duck breeders send in regular consignments of Runner eggs to city markets, "and use every effort in your power to have them regularly quoted in the market columns of the daily papers. You will reap the benefit in the sale of stock and eggs for hatching." Mr. Anderson closed his article as follows: "My advice is by all means secure a strain that lays pure white eggs, as they are more prolific than the others."

Selling and Cooking Value of Indian Runner Eggs

CHAPTER XIII

There are three aspects under which eggs may be considered, viz., as breeding material; as market stock; as a household necessity and luxury. The last is the strong point, if we take numbers into consideration; yet, as the number of eggs produced depends quite largely, in some cases, upon the breeding value, it seems to me rather fitting to consider the eggs as breeding material, before taking up the other two points.

Indian Runner eggs, at their best, hatch better than any other eggs of which I have had personal knowledge, taking the season through. During the 1910 hatching season, we had them running for a long time, under actual test, at from 95 per cent to 100 per cent fertile. One hundred per cent of fertility does not, necessarily, mean a one hundred per cent hatch. But it is known that duck eggs generally hatch well when all the conditions are favorable, as compared with hens' eggs. They need a little more moisture while under incubation, than do the better-known hens' eggs.

The real value of the Runner eggs, as breeding material, will rest very largely on the conditions under which the ducks are kept. In order to be able to hatch near the one hundred per cent which we take as ideal (and not impossible a part of the time) the conditions of yarding, feeding, etc., must also approach the ideal. There must be fair room, proper proportion

of males to females, sufficient shell material and grit, and plenty of fresh, lush green feed, besides the grain and meat, in various forms, which comprise the usual rations, not to mention the indispensable water to drink. It will not do to neglect any of these points, if one desires, or expects good hatches of good ducks.

There is, too, yet another point that needs consideration. I think breeders all through our land have been far too careless, in the past, as to the length of time eggs were kept before shipment. It is hardly fair to blame them harshly, because it has been widely published by the leaders that eggs would keep, with good care, from three weeks to a month, and still hatch reasonably well. Experiments at the Cornell Station show that this is a fallacy; that (hen) eggs hatch without loss from depreciation to any great extent, up to two weeks. After that time, they lose rapidly in value for hatching purposes.

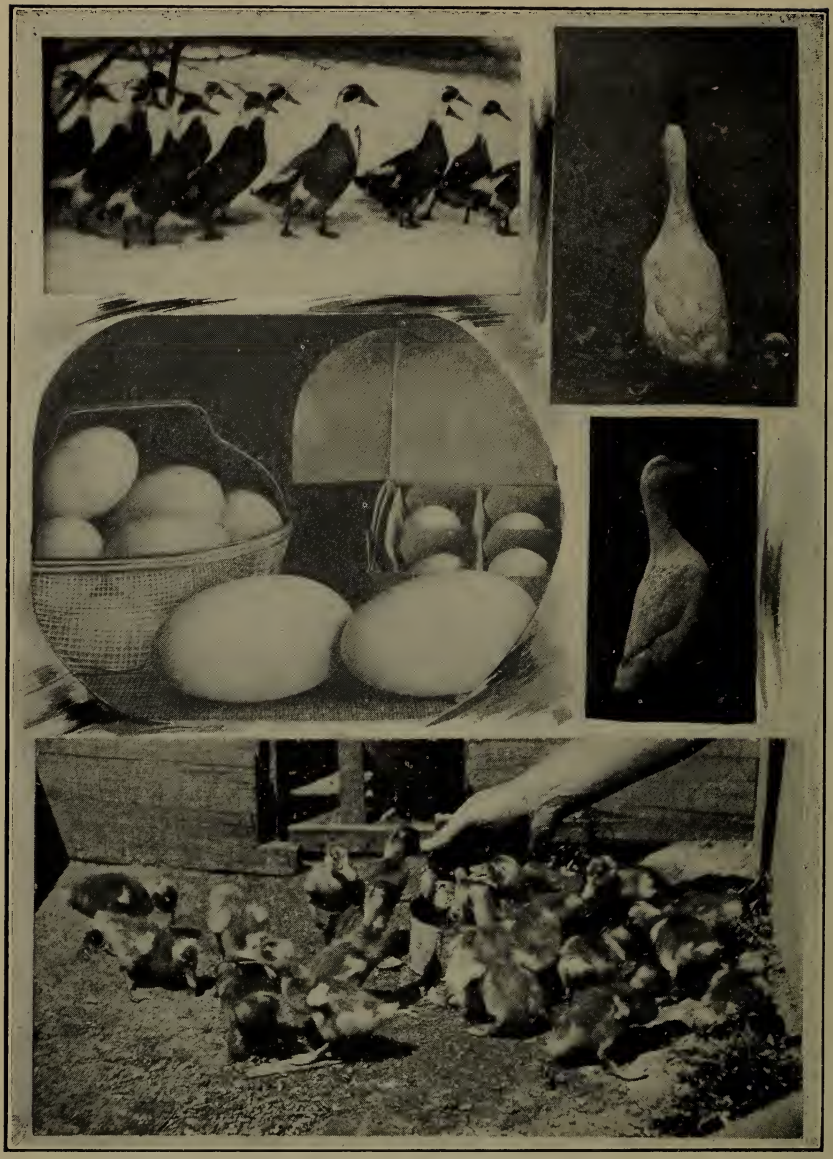
I have known an early shipment of 200 hens' eggs, from one of the most prominent breeders, to give less than twenty chicks. There are two reasons which promptly present themselves, beyond the possibility of infertility: these are, possible chilling of many, and possible holding beyond the age when they were fit to ship. When eggs are scarce, the temptation to hold them longer than one would do later in the season, is strong, and it is buttressed by the known fact that they will keep longer in cold weather than during summer heat. The carriers, too, often put a shipper in the wrong: sometimes by careless handling, against which we are helpless, because we cannot prove it unless there is breakage; sometimes by undue delays on the road. Several times last season, I knew of shipments being twice and three times as long on the road as they should have been. One shipment which, had it been a passenger, would have gone through in 36 hours, was exactly a week on the road. A shipper has a right to calculate on prompt carriage, but the carriers, by a delay like this, may hold his eggs beyond the period of value for hatching purposes. Breeders need to keep these points always in mind, and I think it is wise to err on the safe side, if any, in shipping any kind of duck eggs.

As market stock, the eggs of the Indian Runner have opened up possibilities never before ahead of us, at least, as far as we could know. They not only furnish the large sized product that

everybody likes to buy, but, under favorable conditions, they can be produced more cheaply than the smaller hens' eggs. *I do not, by any means, wish to tempt every one to take up ducks.* There are some points about handling all ducks, especially in confinement, that do not commend themselves to the average person. Among these are the filth of their yards and the work of dressing the carcasses that must, eventually, go to market. The first of these can be overcome by proper management, on the right kind of location. Ducks can be kept, and do thoroughly well in confinement, but this makes more work for the handler, as a matter of course.

We have had Indian Runner ducks, raised wholly in confinement, begin to shell out the eggs while still just less than four and one-half months old. This was without any conscious effort to push them. It is not common to them to lay quite so early as this. *But they do lay earlier than hens, comparatively speaking; they do lay more persistently; they do lay better in the autumn; they do make a higher record, on the average.* When we add these items to the fact that they lay an egg exactly one-half larger than the standard of size for hens' eggs, and that those of the best English type have long been bred to lay white, translucent eggs, it is easy to see that their value as producers of market eggs is abnormally high, as compared with anything yet known.

The eventual value of the green type egg turns entirely on the question as to whether or not a green egg will sell in the market. Possibly—a remote possibility, is it not?—possibly some one will have business acumen and push sufficient to popularize the green egg just as some localities have popularized the brown egg of the Asiatics. This is not saying that they will not sell now; I hold that a perfectly good food product in as good general demand as eggs, should always sell, if the producer have any skill at all in marketing. But I leave it to the good sense of the reader whether the Indian Runner, so prolific and quick maturing; so likely therefore, to increase remarkably fast, would not better think twice before she lays a green egg for the average buyer. For, it is the average buyer to whom we must cater, in all market offerings. We can educate him, but it is slow work, and it takes a skilled market man to do it. Our Irish population, it is said, do not have to be educated; they swear by green wherever they find it.



"Half Waltons" in Snow "Queen's Credit" (Male)

Runner, Embden Goose, "Queen's Content" and Hens' Eggs

English Standard Babies

When we come to the third point, the consideration of the Indian Runner egg as a household luxury, we can make out a tremendous case. For while this "luxury" delights the producer by selling at special seasons, occasionally, at twice the price of hens' eggs, it usually brings but five to ten cents more a dozen, and late in the season sells on a par with hens' eggs. They are proportionately cheaper for the consumer than hens' eggs, just as soon as the latter get above twenty cents. They fall below this figure so seldom nowadays that it is safe to state that the ducks' eggs are always cheaper than hens' eggs, if only ten cents more a dozen. Two of these eggs will, at any time, take the place of three hens' eggs, even when the latter are fully up to the standard, market size, which is two ounces. No eggs were ever more delicately sweet than those of the Indian Runner; so that it may fairly be said that we shall soon have a luxury which is not extravagant, and which, it is hoped, may soon become plentiful on our markets. At the date of this writing, only a few favored buyers can have them, because there are not nearly enough to go around. The cities have hardly heard of the Indian Runner, as yet.

I am fortunate in being able to report a household test, made by Mrs. Grant M. Curtis, the editor of a Table Department in the "Reliable Poultry Journal." A breeder of the white-egg type, in western New York, sent to Mrs. Curtis's office some eggs for testing on all cookery points. The breeder's confidence in the English type of Indian Runner as a winner was not misplaced. When the eggs were hard-boiled, or poached, the only fault that was found was that the whites were a little tougher than those of the hens' eggs, cooked in the same ways; but, the yolk was reported as smoother and richer tasting. Soft-boiled, and used as frosting, they were affirmed to be equally good with hens' eggs. In custards, two eggs to a quart of milk took the place of the five eggs the cook was wont to use, and "it was as delicious a custard as we ever tasted."

The lady who made these tests tried the eggs in making sponge cake, also, "believing that sponge cake is one of the most difficult cakes to make. Three eggs were used in the place of five with equally good results." The report closes: "We could not detect any unusual flavor in any of the eggs used, not even in the custard and cake. Having tested them, we should not

hesitate to purchase such duck eggs. . . . in preference to hens' eggs, which are, alas, ofttimes so far below what should be standard size that we wish, with 'Uncle I. K.' that eggs were sold by the pound." As Mrs. Curtis acknowledged herself to have been, before this test, somewhat prejudiced against duck eggs, this may be regarded as a handsome *amende* to the Indian Runner.

Not enough eggs remained to try omelet making. If the experimenter could have tried it, she would have found that it is in this point that the Indian Runner eggs score most strongly, perhaps. They make a most delicious omelet, will bear more liquid than hens' eggs, for this use, and may be used with water, instead of milk, when necessity demands. The firmer white doubtless is an advantage here, as the omelet is not so likely to fall, and some like it better with water than with milk, while the scalded milk is thus avoided in the case of the many invalids to whom milk seems to be poison.

As an involuntary testimony to quality, the following little story of a 1911 happening is significant: Two "cranks on eggs" were about to have their breakfast. It was mid-October, when laying things generally are prone to go on a strike. There were 75 laying (?) hens and 10 laying ducks on the place. The day before, the 75 hens had given seven eggs; the ten ducks, five eggs.

Here," said one, "if you like hens' eggs best, you can have hens' eggs this morning."

"I imagine I do," naively responded the other," but when they are both fresh, I can't tell the difference. I've tried and tried to find,—as the little girl said about liver,—'something in it that don't taste good, and I really can't. It's just an old prejudice, as I proved the other morning by eating a duck egg inadvertently, thinking it was a delicious hen's egg."

Some Spurious and Some Genuine Indian Runners

CHAPTER XIV

By Mrs. Andrew Brooks.

[There is no more faithful and ardent worker, and none with stronger convictions of the superior value of the English-bred, Penciled Runner of the white-egg type than Mrs. Andrew Brooks. She raises them largely, has the courage to pay for good stock, and almost literally lives with and for her Runners. It was her courage and persistence which stayed the downfall of the Penciled type when the American Standard threatened to sweep it off the earth. (I say this, because it was she who would not be said nay in her petition that I, who was breeding Runners to the English Standard and not bothering my head about the rest, should use my influence to save this valuable white-egg Runner for the farmers of the country.) It was she who sent eggs and ducks to be tested by those whose opinions were worth while; it was she who showed eggs to prove their size and purity of color; it was she who showed ducks where she knew they would be discredited by the judge, in order to learn valuable facts about judging as it is.

In a prominent poultry journal, late in 1911, Mrs. Brooks, by request, told something of her own start. She there said: "Poultry keeping has solved the problem of an income for the women of the farms." One year, Mrs. Brooks herself sold

almost $1100.00 worth of products from about 50 Runners and 250 Barred Rocks, mostly at market rates. Now, she does better, still holding to both, while "the ducks have it," as it were. It will be seen that she knows whereof she speaks.

The remainder of this chapter gives her view of the Indian Runner situation. C. S. V.]

As Indian Runners have been in this country only a few years, and an unjust and misfit Standard of so-called "Perfection" was made for the breed, practically disqualifying true Runners, the present mixed and confusing state of affairs is not surprising.

In making a standard, attention should be paid to nature's laws. This was not done. It is an established fact that the natural colors of Indian Runners are fawn and white, the female having penciled plumage, while the drakes have cap and cheek markings of dull, bronzy green with rumps bronzy black or brown, turning dark brown or fawn when coat is old (the shade depending upon the length of time that has elapsed since the molt, but never the same as body color). The American Standard *has* demanded the same color in both sexes, namely, "light fawn," even throughout. Such a standard placed a premium on faking: blood foreign to the breed was bred in to secure light fawn color with no penciling on plumage of females and drakes having head and rump markings the same as the body color. As would be expected, this addition of foreign blood has brought about grave structural changes, altered the color of the eyes, also the color and size of the eggs, besides lessening the number of eggs. The chief value of the Indian Runners lies in their capacity to be veritable egg-factories of large, white, marketable eggs. As layers of such eggs, and as foragers, the Standard hit them hardest, *requiring wrong position of legs,* thus destroying the characteristic Runner gait and making less able foragers of them. The new Standard is an improvement over the old one in some respects, but it demands the *brown eyes,* which have been acquired in making over the breed to conform to standard requirements, and to produce the required color of plumage. A shade in color of feathers would not much matter, but it should not be gained at the sacrifice of utility value. Longfellow in The Builders said:

"Nothing useless is or low
Each thing in its place is best;
And what seems but idle show
Strengthens and supports the rest."

This applies to fancy and commercial poultry; for, it should be remembered that the whole poultry industry is a structure resting upon the "firm and ample" foundations of economic value. If we tear this down and destroy utility, how long will the industry survive?

I have had much correspondence with Indian Runner breeders in all parts of the United States and all their testimony proves the same thing, viz., that eggs from the light fawn American Standard-bred ducks are laid in fewer numbers; such stock does not begin to lay so early in the season by some weeks; also ceases laying earlier in the fall: while true Runners do not cease entirely, even during the moult, as I can testify from experience. A worse fault, in the light fawn ducks, is that they mostly lay green or tinted eggs of smaller size, that do not sell for so much. Our best markets call for white eggs, and owing to their mixed parentage these light fawns cannot reproduce themselves reliably. All my correspondents tell the same story of sending for eggs at high prices (naming the most prominent breeders;) of getting green or tinted or mixed colors of eggs that produce ducklings which show lack of uniformity, some being mostly yellow, some light and some dark. One man wrote: "I want to acquire a flock of genuine English Runners that will be second to none. I have enough of *mongrels*. I want a duck that will lay white eggs and plenty of them and reproduce themselves in type and markings, instead of the young looking like they were the result of mixing half a dozen widely different breeds. I'm sick and disgusted with my humiliating experience with American Standard Indian Runners. I have them that were hatched from eggs from ducks claimed to score 96 points, *and there is not one closer to the Indian Runner Standard than is a Rouen.*" Another, late in the season, said he had spent weeks in trying to find eggs from flocks guaranteed to lay only white eggs and had not discovered *one* such flock. He judged by the discussion which he read in the papers about the Standard that I must have them, and added: "For heaven's sake don't say you have all the orders you can fill." One in-

quirer asks: "Will you furnish ducks that are guaranteed to lay white eggs only, or money refunded?" It is a significant fact that most of such inquiries come from the midst of the locality where the light fawns are most extensively bred. Another writer, who met with disappointment in trying to breed to the American Standard, wrote of buying the highest priced birds the most prominent "light fawn" breeder would sell, keeping them side by side with real Runners with the same care and feeding, only to find that they were not so valuable as the ducks they were trying to displace, as they were so much *poorer layers,* and of *tinted eggs.* Hundreds of ducks laying green or tinted eggs are kept in some flocks. The eggs are scattered broadcast all over the country to purchasers who believe that they are buying Runners, innocently supposing that "Runners are Runners," and not knowing that there are imitations of the real article, which are sold as "genuine." This is only a faint picture of the situation. No wonder that true Runners are scarce and high priced.

Who can count the cost of the harm done? It is beyond computation. The fancy and the utility should go together, but as matters now stand prospective buyers will have to decide whether they will breed for show and fancy requirements or whether they want the most valuable, practical duck from the utility point of view, the ones giving best money value. For us, we will concede Standard excellence (?) to the fanciers; they are welcome to the duck they have created! Theirs will answer for exhibition purposes, as judges must place awards according to Standard. We will concern ourselves with maintaining the breed in its highest type and purity for the farmer and utility breeder. Runners are pre-eminently the farmers' breed. They are at their best on the free range of the farms, as they get along with less care than hens. They are what the farmers need in these days of high priced labor. Runners will lay as many eggs as the best breeds of hens. No other breed of ducks will lay so many white eggs; no others are such foragers, or so capable of gaining a large share of their living, thus reducing the cost of feed, and they adapt themselves well to adverse conditions. In the eighth annual Australian Laying competition two pens of Runners averaged above 200 eggs each. As no meat was obtainable, no animal food was fed in

their ration during the time of the test. What hens fed in like manner could have made so good a showing? Meat or animal food is even more necessary for ducks than for hens. When given free range they find much of it for themselves, working as they do, busy as bees from morning till late at night (stormy days the same or more so) thrusting their bills deep into the grass, searching for worms or insects. Nothing escapes their notice! A farmer who is a near neighbor of ours has six Runners, yearlings. Now, in the latter part of November, he is receiving 4 or 5 eggs every day and feeds them only corn; no mash at all. As they have free range, I suppose they balance their own ration. They are kept dry-bedded at night: the first essential in raising ducks. Early hatched young ducks or yearlings, or older birds, if managed right, will lay as well as, or better than, hens, in the fall when prices are high and eggs most appreciated. I know personally that, with such care as the average farmer can give, they will give flock averages of 150 eggs each in a year. The results of the annual duck laying competitions in Australia are very interesting and instructive, but I am not so much concerned with the records of such tests or the records of individual layers, as I am in the *flock averages* of these ducks, when well managed on the free range of the farms or in the hands of the utility poultry breeder. The labor question is getting to be a serious one, but the ducks help to solve it, as they are more easily cared for than hens. They are not troubled with lice, nor with mites, so that there are no houses to spray nor roosts to grease, no frozen combs to treat, no dropping boards to scrape off, no scratching up of gardens or flying into grain bins. Nor is there need for so many males as are needed with the larger breeds: one male being sufficient for ten or more females on free range. They can be housed very cheaply; fences cost less, if the ducks have to be yarded, as low fences will hold them; when matured, they eat no more than hens. It is also less work to raise the young stock, because they grow up so quickly. The young ones may be brought into laying at five months of age, and eggs sell for more than hens' eggs. As the call has been so great for hatching eggs, I sell at market only a portion of the time, but I have sold enough to know that eggs will sell for five to six cents per dozen more than hens' eggs. Have shipped to a commission dealer in New York

for the month before Easter when I received from 18 to 20 cents per dozen *more* than I received for hens' eggs. I learned that after Easter commission men pay a premium of five cents per dozen more than they pay for Leghorn eggs. They may be packed in one side of the case by themselves, if there are not sufficient to fill the case.

Runners are so valuable for layers that they are not sold to any extent at market for the table. But the surplus males find sale at good prices, the meat being so tender and delicious. The Runner is really in a class by itself, as it has such rich, gamy flavor. Since these ducks grow up so quickly and cost less to feed than Pekins, there is no reason why enterprising poultrymen cannot build up a good trade for them as market ducks.

The Future of the Indian Runners in America

CHAPTER XV

There is no question, I think, that at the present writing, the majority of the *fanciers* of the country still favor the plain, fawn type that has been convicted of laying so many green eggs (showing impurity, Mr. Jaeger says!) It could hardly be otherwise, indeed, since the American Standard has demanded for some years back, that only such birds should be bred. Of course, all but the independent thinkers followed like sheep, whatever the Standard demanded, whether it meant a good Indian Runner, or not. And, I have no doubt that most of them have taught themselves to admire the plain feathers most, in the Indian Runner, even if they did not do so at first. Yet, the very same breeders would go into raptures over a Cornish hen if she showed extra good penciling! Many of these breeders are so inconsistent as to argue for the greater beauty of the plain Runner, when it is a well-known fact that *pencilings, lacings, and the like have given all the more distinctive beauty to our wonderfully varied breeds of the ornamental types among our domestic fowls.* Those distinctively known as "ornamental" (therefore especially beautiful, of course) are the ones that show most variation in colors and markings. The plain are simply—well, *plain,* and that is all there is to it.

Many of the judges, I am told, have Indian Runners. I can name several whom I know to breed them. Of course, they have

exceptional opportunities to get good, Standard birds, and it would be too much to expect of human nature that all these people should now be willing to have a differing bird made Standard, off hand, no matter if it is the true, original Runner, and a better economic bird.

There were, in a dozen of the best poultry papers, during the height of the 1911 season, something like 300 breeders advertising Indian Runners, virtually all claiming the "true" type. Those of the plain-feather camp, meant "true to American Standard." Those who bred the original Runner, meant "true to the English Standard type," though I fancy most of them have tried to lighten the color so as to make the pencilings less distinct. Indeed, indistinct penciling is what the English Standard calls for.

The content of "truth" in the Indian Runner of the future should be incontestably large, since there is so much variation, yet all "true." It is also true that variation is likely to continue. Among all the breeders whom I know to have carried the English type, the large majority have announced their intention of keeping to that type, regardless of what the American Standard for fancy fowls may be. The chief, economic reasons which they give are: the better laying of the English type; and, the white eggs. The promise is, then, that there will continue to be bred in this country two types of Indian Runner, differing from each other really more than the white Orpington, say, differs from the white Plymouth Rock. Both will claim to be "true," and the confusion that will result will be intensified as numbers increase.

This means—(*as I must again emphasize*)—that it behooves every one who wants Indian Runners, no matter of which type, to inform himself thoroughly as to the differences in the two types, and to be very sure that he buys of a breeder who has what he wants. The two types have been *bred together,* which of course makes more confusion. The oldest of the breeders here of the English type sold birds, years ago, to the chief promoters of the American Standard type of to-day. Very many breeders have tried both types. A dozen or more of them have written of their experiences in the poultry papers. Of them all, I think only one has reported that the American type were

the better layers. All the others stated that, when handled side by side, the English type were the better layers.

I am not for a minute in opposition to those who really want to breed the Runner of the American, Standard type. What I do want, is to make sure that the farmers, who are to supply the great majority of buyers of Indian Runner eggs for hatching, for some years at least, shall get the type of bird that will prove most practical. They will stand, to a man, for the white-egg type, I am certain. They will also stand for the English type strongly when they are made to know that it calls for a bird with longer body, and therefore with more egg and meat capacity. Even the Sceretary of the National Indian Runner Club said publicly (June, 1910): "If we lower the type and egg production by having them fawn and white, we certainly should have a different Standard."

When we think of the best English Indian Runners, a yard long from tip of bill to tip of tail, and compare them, mentally, with the runty, American Standard type too often shown in past years, it is easy to see why the breeders to the American Standard fight against having the Standard weight raised. Many of the pictures of the American type show a bird with neck about as long as body, not including tail, the body being short and stumpy at the stern like the one at the right in our cut of the American Standard-bred males. Often the stern is so stumpy that it gives a peculiar impression of being "out of drawing someway," as an artist would say. It does not balance gracefully. The effect of having the legs set so far back in order to get the running balance, and then tucking the stern up so stumpily, is indeed, ungraceful in the extreme. The exhibition birds here shown are from some of the most prominent breeders of the American type of Runner and shown in 1909 and 1910. Neither in shape nor in carriage can they compare with really good Indian Runners.

If each breeder will have the courage of his convictions, and advertise plainly what he has, it will save much confusion for buyers, and an immense amount of disparagement of Indian Runner breeders. At the present writing, there are plenty of buyers for both types. Some time ago, I received an inquiry for "first-class fawn and white stock." Believing that this customer wanted the American type, I answered briefly, telling him that

the English type of Runner which I carried, would not win firsts for him in any large show, under present Standard demands. To my surprise, back came a letter wanting my birds, the price being the same as would have been asked for the same grade of birds bred to American Standard.

It is scarcely possible, I think, to insist too strongly that those who believe in the Indian Runner as bred to the specific, English Standard, should make clear in each advertisement, just what they are offering. Only in this way, can we avoid the infinite confusion which is likely to arise.

In 1910, I said: "It would be only just if classes should be made, in the shows, for the English-bred duck. It would be the only *amende* that could be made for having taken the breed name away from this duck and given it to a substitute duck. It is perfectly practicable, as I see it, to have classes for the English type, and judged by the English Standard." This good work has now begun.

As I wrote the closing words of this chapter in 1910, there came to my desk a new booklet from a breeder of the "fawn and white" type for the last six years. Referring to the Runners of the American Standard type, he mentions their "real value as a layer of *large, green and white* eggs of much value." He also states that he would prefer all white eggs. Inasmuch as this testimony comes from the midst of the "fawn and white" camp, surely none who breed the English type can be accused of unfairness or of bias in making similar statements. And for their own trade, they need only to make it widely known that they have the strain known to lay white eggs, and trade *will run to meet them*, as it has been doing for some years past.

Future? Her future brightens daily! Nearly every mail brings good news of some new opening, some change to higher status of the genuine Runners. Only occasionally is there any doubt of the Runner.

I read on this day of writing, one of the very few stories of failure with the Indian Runner. The story ran that the first sitting of eggs from "a prominent breeder" gave only two weak ducklings; a second sitting gave five ducklings, all of which lived to maturity, but from the two ducks, June-hatched, only one egg was received in March, and later, the owner sold them in disgust. I do not hesitate to say that one of two things was

back of this: either the stock was run-down, weak show stock or close-yarded till it was worthless, or else the ducks had no decent care.

Again I say: Whether the genuine Indian Runner of the best type will make good or not does not enter into the question of the future of the breed here at all; she will absolutely do her part. *That is proved.* The only thing that does enter as a real question is whether or not growers have sufficient business ability to make a market for the eggs as table eggs. The Runner will furnish at least three varieties of fancy ducks; her "difference," her distinction ensure that. But, if, as a farm duck, she is to make good, people must be able to sell the eggs. If James Rankin was able to push a duck not at all wanted into the market, and to create such a demand that these birds sold by the tens of thousands in individual growers' hands, are we willing to admit that we cannot make a market for a product in such infinitely greater demand, viz., large white eggs? I affirm that, if this matter does not work out as we would like, *it will be our fault,* not that of the Indian Runner!

The most interesting possibility, to me, just now, is the future of the Indian Runner. Every day adds to the possibilities. The morning mail, this November day,—the day before the Indian Runner Duck Book goes to press,—brought me the news that the big Chicago show would receive the English Runners and the white Runners on the same terms with the American Standard type. For this immediate outcome along the line of justice, we have to thank especially Mr. Theo. Hewes, the Secretary, and Mr. W. J. Patton. I hope breeders will show their appreciation by sending a good class.

There is really no limit, as things promise at present, to the helpful future of the Indian Runner. The south has been shipping a few duck eggs in late winter, the best being scheduled as "Baltimore eggs," at wonderfully good prices. She would be missing the greatest new, farm opportunity that has ever been offered her did she not add the Indian Runner to her helpers, and send *more* duck eggs through the channel already open. She sees it, I know, for inquiries from the south multiply!

Under date of March 6, 1910, "The Egg Reporter" quoted 22½c and 23c, "the lowest price so far this season" on hens' eggs, fresh gathered firsts. At the same time, ducks' eggs were

referred to as "beginning to move; the best coming from Baltimore, and these bring 42c." If as the New York dealer assured me, New York market, even now, will average 35c a dozen for ducks' eggs, the year around, the 180-egg duck will bring in $5.25. Who would ask a better investment?

An attempt was made by a Northern breeder to influence the future of the Indian Runner in this country by sending a pen of the Penciled, white-egg English-bred type to the National Competition in Missouri, just beginning its work with the month this book goes to press. Once more, the Express Companies killed the hopes of one of their patrons, as they have done in thousands of instances before. The birds were nearly all smothered *en route,* and thus was the Penciled Runner hindered from showing her pace in utility work. It had been hoped that a test in this country might settle many questions now open to difference of opinion.

The Newer Variety, The White Runner

CHAPTER XVI

The future of the Indian Runners must, of course, include the variety just coming into popularity here, viz., the White Runners. Though but recently advertised for the first in this country, the White Runners promise to interest the public at large so greatly that they deserve accented notice. In California, in the middle-west, in the middle states, they are already being advertised. Last year, I said: "One cannot say much that is definite about their quality, as it is likely, it seems to me, to be exceedingly 'spotty' for some time."

My reasons for thinking this lay largely in the fact that the very evident crossing of some of the original importations of Indian Runners with white ducks had resulted in so many badly-mixed specimens, showing much broken white, of which buyers of Indian Runners complained so bitterly. There cannot be much doubt that very many White Runners have arisen through some of these crosses. The most likely cross is that of the White Pekin duck. I saw Pekins in a recent very large show, that were as upright in carriage as almost any of the Runners, and one specimen in especial that was fully as erect in carriage as any Indian Runner I had ever seen shown. As the Revision Committee's recommendation for Pekins at St. Louis was for a body one-fourth longer than the ideal presented them by the

artist, and a clean-cut throat without dewlap, the Pekin will be even better than in the past, as a promising foundation for a cross leading to White Runners. A Runner built on such a foundation would be too broad and thick-set, for many generations, no doubt; but human nature is such that it would doubtless be used, in the future, as it has in the past, if pointers from experience can be at all relied upon.

I wish to call especial attention to the cut of a White Runner female given herewith. It is by far the most typical specimen of the Ideal Indian Runner, that I have yet seen. This bird is, moreover, a straight sport, as far as anything I really know can show. I do know that no white blood has been introduced into her ancestry since it came into my hands, some years ago. Other breeding experience would make any of us argue that there might be white blood somewhere behind her. As to proof,—there is none, and the testimony of her beautiful shape seems to throw the Pekin out of consideration, unless, by some trick of Mendel's law, we have a dominant white from the Pekin, in connection with a dominant shape from a Runner ancestor. But I think Mendel's law, as he would have had it applied, is being more questioned now than ever before since Professor Bateson brought it to our notice. That is, the many investigation experiments, in the effort to prove it a breeding law, seem to show it less helpful generally in breeding than was at first expected. Besides, it is a known fact that all colored breeds sometimes "sport" into white.

These White Runners are not an absolutely new product except in possible specific cases. Mr. H. DeCourcy, speaking of the Runners as they appeared in Ireland some years ago, wrote, in the Reliable Poultry Journal, that the Runners had been bred for several years by farmers, with no regard to type and feathering. Yet he stated that the distinctive features of the bird were so fixed that they still tended to dominate. I noticed that he referred to the "carriage" as penguin-like, not making the blunder of the American 1905 Standard in saying that the FORM is like the penguin, which is positively absurd!

He spoke of three distinct varieties at the time of writing, known in Ireland, and said that the penciled fawn and white—"a beautifully-*penciled fawn* color," as he described it—"certainly has a distinctive shape and carriage which the other varieties

"White Queen Quality" Runners. (Extreme pose of excitement)

possess but in a modified form, and it is most probable that both the Brown-and-White and the White varieties have been bred from the original Fawn-and-White, either by the admixture of foreign blood, or by selection, or by both."

This testimony must be considered by any fair mind as absolutely unbiased, because it was given before our Standard-makers discovered that the plain fawn, with white, was "the one and only true." It was published in this country before there was any question of breeding to a solid fawn as far as our Standard was concerned; though our Standard was fitted to some sports in the hands of a single breeder,—if I am correctly informed,—soon after.

Last year, I said in the first edition of the Indian Runner Duck Book: "The white bird, everywhere and always, is a popular bird. And, as soon as the public is assured that it breeds true in any measure, we may look for a strong movement toward the White Runner."

The march of events is already showing my 1910 prediction just. One breeder of the White Runners calls them "the coming duck of America"; another says: "It seems to have outclassed its parent in the matter of egg production and in the production of pure white eggs." (Its parent, from this point of view, being the American Standard Runner). Also: "as a fancy fowl, for pleasure and profit, I doubt if there is any other that has ever proved itself the equal of the White Runner Duck."

To be sure, these are the words of lovers and advertisers of the variety. But even T. F. McGrew, the prominent judge and head of a Correspondence Department in a widely-known system of schools, voiced something of the same opinion recently in a private letter, when he said: "I believe that the most popular of all Runners will be the White Runner Ducks." He also referred to the fact that breeders are dropping the adjective "Indian," in this variety, with commendation.

With reference to the varying quality of White Runners, I might mention a report that came over from England concerning some which were exhibited there last autumn. The regular correspondent of "The Feathered World" (the most highly regarded English poultry periodical, I believe) said, with regard to those appearing at the Crystal Palace Show (England), after describing the new "Upright Mysteries," or "Fairy Fawns," as

some call them: "As to the Whites, penned alongside the extremes above named, perhaps it's scarcely fair to criticise. Comparisons may be unfair. I can, however, now see the force of the proposed sprinting contests; the 'made in Germany' fraternity might very well benefit by a trot around alongside the 'uprights.' Still, they are under way, and no doubt in a few years we may see them as perfect in soda-water-bottle character as the winners of to-day, when even the orthodox 'Fawn and whites' had to take a back seat."

This indicates that far the best birds seen in England to date are the "fairy fawns," and not the 'orthodox' Fawns, nor the Whites. Where the first sport of the Whites was an exceptionally good bird, the progeny has a chance to be better than most of the Fawns. When not exceptional, the progeny is likely to be common-place also.

A large group was shown in photograph in one of the widely-circulated poultry magazines a few weeks before this writing. In this flock appear a few birds of extra-fine carriage!; in it, also, appear a goodly number of the kind one would rather not have intending customers see. This shows that even the best breeders do not have *all* good birds, and that to buy of any one simply because he is known to have *some* good specimens and not knowing anything about the actual birds one is buying, is too likely to prove a fiasco.

Earlier, I had thought it probable that quality in the White Runner might be a thing difficult to secure at once. But a correspondent sent me a photograph a few days before this is written, showing, I think, a more beautiful bird, for type, than I have ever yet seen at the shows in any one of the three varieties, —a picture, indeed, of white loveliness. I am exceedingly sorry, from one point of view, that this book is to come out before the great shows of 1911-1912, as I think the Runner alleys in these shows will be wonderfully interesting, this season. I am hoping, both that the management in general will give us classes for White Runners and the penciled, English type, and that breeders will make haste to fill them with good specimens.

The White Runner has been described in at least one American periodical as having a full breast, with more meat than the original Runners carried. From the fancy point of view, I think that to breed thus to a fuller breast would be a mistake.

I happen to have personal data upon this very point, because many of the very best (otherwise) of my penciled Runners have had this full breast. It makes a pretty bird, but not one so distinctive as the original type called for in the English Standard, and shown in our American Standard by Mr. A. O. Schilling. The birds from painting in R. P. J. for September, 1911, look to have fuller breasts by reason of being a trifle thinner just below the breast. Frankly, these birds give me the impression of woodeny decoy ducks. A group in the owner's catalogue is decidedly more beautiful.

These birds, and the "ideal" birds shown in the American Standard of Perfection, stand at an angle of 45 degrees. The English ideal is 55 to 65 degrees when in motion, and 65 to 75 degrees when on the alert. I believe that there are few in this country that will reach 55 to 65 degrees when in motion; but I have seen birds easily reach 75 degrees when on the alert, and they were reported from the Crystal Palace Show in England last year as reaching practically 90 degrees! These were, however, from the "new blood from the native source" recently acquired and bred in there, and I presume this country can show nothing quite equal to it, even in an instantaneous pose. I have, indeed, seen birds "stand on end," as it is expressed, and other breeders have told me they had them. But I cannot see all the flocks of the country, and no pictures yet sent me show such an extreme pose. The American Standard gives no definite rules for carriage, the nearest it comes to this being in the words, "carried erectly."

White Runners are reported now in hand that have laid unceasingly for more than a year, eight of the eggs being equal in weight to a dozen hens' eggs. Why should any one question the equal value of the White Runner with the original fawn and white sorts? Of the two variations in blood in this country of which I have knowledge, one is, *I know*, a sport; the other also claims to be a sport. The White Runners are also said to be more valuable than the original types. If they are, in my opinion it is simply because, at the present time, they will bring higher prices. As to actual, intrinsic value, I doubt if either the white or the penciled excels the other by the value of a copper. Both are "gold-mines" for the people who have skill in handling and skill in marketing, be it as utility birds or as the

fanciest of the fancy, and the charmingest of the charming. In the last, however, the lovely white variety is a lap or two ahead of its blood-rival, the sprightly fawn and white. Those who think "trimmings" add to the beauty of all things, may possibly convince themselves that the fawns with their liberal trimmings of white, are the lovelier.

One breeder says of the whites: "They seem to fill the long-felt want for a fowl that is easy to rear, one that grows rapidly and matures at an early age, one that produces eggs both summer and winter, and a fowl that can live on almost any kind of food. Such a one we have in the White Runner duck." She continues, "I can conscientiously recommend this new variety," and says that those who raise it will be in the happy condition of never waiting for either eggs or spending money in the purse.

In some quarters, there has been much doubt as to the kind of bird the new, White Runner might be. Suspicion seemed to forecast that it was likely to have outside blood. It is, as I have said, no doubt, possible that this may be true of some strains—if such they can be called. A sample of this feeling reached me in July of 1911, from one who had seen a cut of Somebody's White Runners, so-called. He wrote:

"I don't think I care for any White Runners; the head is too large, the neck too thick, the body too short, the breast prominent, and carriage bad; in fact, it lacks about every characteristic we look for in a Runner. It would seem that there is now, and will be almost as much danger of breeders using foreign blood to get white ducks as there has been to get solid light fawn and white ducks."

This does not look like a man who would invest early in White Runners. Yet, having found a breeder whose word he was willing to trust, he bought a start in White Runners in the following September. His first letter, after their receipt, was of this tenor: "I am very much pleased with the White Runners. All that I have seen heretofore and all the cuts that I have gotten hold of have shown such coarse, angular birds that I had almost concluded that I didn't want any White Runners in mine. However, I felt sure that —— would either breed good ones or he would not breed any, and you can tell him from me that I have no kick coming on White Runners."

Judging from the way they have been received thus far by

those who know of the better types, I think it quite safe to say that their popularity will distance that of the parti-colored varieties. In the premium list of the Southern International Poultry Association scheduled for December, 1911, special high first prizes of $10.00 for singles have been given to sixteen of the most popular varieties. Among the sixteen *appear both the American Standard Runners and the English penciled type!* This is the first *long step ahead* in the matter of justice to the penciled Runners. I congratulate the managers, and especially the Secretary, Mr. Loring Brown, who was largely instrumental in having this action taken.

[A few days later, Mr. Theo. Hewes, Secretary of the great Chicago Show, announced that Chicago would make a class for the Penciled Runners. This gave great encouragement to those breeding to the English Standard and will help to keep a true source of supply for the farms. During the same week, word came to me that the Runners with original native blood would surely be shown at Madison Square Garden in December, 1911.]

Some have ventured to inquire, rather timidly, as to the comparative productive capacity and vigor of the White variety. As to vigor, shown by fertility, I may say that I have known the White Runners to produce eggs running to nearly 100 per cent of fertility for months in succession. An occasional sitting would give 100 per cent of ducklings. This is as good as any variety of duck or of hen will do. The White Runner is not, of course, thoroughly tested in this country. But when she is a sport, I know no reason why she should not be equal in all respects to her fawn progenitors.

As to beauty and charm, a customer recently wrote me, after several months' experience with the White Runners: "I do not think there is anything else in birds that can be so enchanting as the White Runner."

At the present time, the older variety has been so widely advertised, has made small fortunes for so many, and has so caught the public fancy through its style, that it has the greater call, by far. But, inasmuch as the white bird has ever been the favored one in American eyes, and inasmuch as it has greater beauty with at least equal utility qualities, I look for the White Runner to sweep the decks as soon as there are enough of them to fill the demand.

As to the possibility of filling it at the present time, a letter recently received puts the situation very clearly:

"I have found it difficult," writes this stranger, "to keep what I needed for my own pens. But friends in California have been successful in their 'beggings'—and begging it really seems to be out there, as breeders simply refuse all offers—and I am having forty birds come on, from which I shall select for myself some new matings." When it has come to buyers *begging* to be allowed to pay "any price" for birds and then not getting them, it promises well for the White Runner, as an investment.

The White Runner, having, when descended from sports, all the effort toward high breeding of many years behind her in her ancestry, has the possibility of improving with great rapidity. I do not hesitate to say that one who starts with Indian Runners will do infinitely better to get one good pair rather than six pairs of average birds, even though the pair cost as much as the other six pairs. Probably this is true of all fancy fowls. I know it to be true of the White Runner.

Mr. Scott, who claims the highest egg record of the world, makes the public statement that he considers the loss of 24 ducklings out of 35 in his first season with his present birds as the best thing that could have happened to him, since the few left comprised the famous heavy layer, so that most of his stock came from her. To get all one's stock, from the beginning, from an extra layer or an extra-good exhibition specimen of extra vigor is the one thing that may count most for the beginner. It saves him from many years of up-hill work in trying to breed up to the good specimens.

As to ornamental quality, there is nothing in nature more lovely and charming than white water fowl playing on the water. The swans have been considered most attractive ornaments since time immemorial. Men have bought white domestic fowls wherewith to ornament the lawns of their country places, merely for the beauty of the contrast. The White Embden Goose and the White Chinese variety have also been much used as ornamental fowls. But the White Indian Runner, slimmer, graceful as a fawn, distinctive in shape and carriage, bids fair to become infinitely more popular than either the goose or even the swan could ever become.

Altogether, it seems to me that the most beautiful and distinctive fancy fowl ever offered to the American public is the charming White Runner Duck.

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